



SEPTEMBER 2022

**Ending Violence Against LGBTQI+ People**  
**Global evidence and emerging insights into what works**

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## About the What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls programme

What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale is a seven-year programme (2021-2028) funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to scale up global evidence-based and practice-informed efforts to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG).

As part of it, the Ending Violence against Women and Children (VAWC) Helpdesk is a high-quality, tailored research and programming advice service that feeds learning from research and practice, including from our project partners, directly to FCDO and other HMG departments. Helpdesk staff support HMG colleagues to use evidence and practice-based lessons to design and implement cutting-edge violence prevention programming. The Ending VAWC Helpdesk is delivered by Social Development Direct.

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# Acronyms

<b>ACEs</b>	Adverse Childhood Experiences
<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>CEDAW</b>	The Convention on the Elimination on all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CSE</b>	Comprehensive sexuality education
<b>DEDAW</b>	The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GBQ</b>	Gay, bisexual and queer
<b>GSA</b>	Gay Straight Alliances
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally displaced persons
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate partner violence
<b>LBT</b>	Lesbian, bisexual and transgender
<b>LBQ</b>	Lesbian, bisexual and queer
<b>LGBT</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
<b>LGBTQI</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersex
<b>LGBTQI+</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersex+
<b>LGBTQIA</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersex, asexual
<b>LMICs</b>	Low-and-middle income countries
<b>MERL</b>	Monitoring, evaluation, research and learning
<b>ODA</b>	Official development assistance
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-traumatic stress disorder
<b>SOGI</b>	Sexual orientation and gender identity
<b>SOGIE</b>	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
<b>SOGIESC</b>	Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics
<b>WASH</b>	Water, sanitation and hygiene
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against women and girls

# Glossary<sup>1</sup>

**Adverse Childhood Experiences:** Adverse childhood experiences include a range of potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood, including experiencing sexual, physical, or emotional violence; childhood neglect and household disfunction; and witnessing violence in home or community as a child.

**Asexual:** Refers to a person who may experience romantic or emotional attraction, but who generally does not experience sexual attraction to anyone. Sometimes the term “ace” is used.

**Bisexual:** Refers to people who have the capacity for romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction to people of more than one gender. There are many other terms that people who are attracted to people of more than one gender use to describe their sexual orientation, including pansexual, fluid, and omnisexual.

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. A cis person can have any sexual orientation.

**Cisnormativity:** The organisation of social structures, relationships, and societal institutions based on the assumption that all people are cisgender, i.e. that people’s gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Conversion practises:** In this report, ‘conversion practices’ is used to describe any practices and efforts that are perpetrated with the motive to change the SOGIESC of LGBTQI+ people. Common forms of conversion practices are individual and group talk therapy, prayer, religious rituals, aversion therapy<sup>2</sup> and a range of practices taking place in live-in facilities.

**Dyadism:** The assumption that all people have genitalia, hormones and chromosomes that conform to social and medical definitions of female and male bodies.

**Gay:** Refers to a man whose enduring emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction is to individuals of the same gender. It is typically used in reference to boys and men, but can also be used by girls and women who are attracted to people of the same gender.

**Gender binarism:** The organisation of social structures, relationships, and societal institutions based on the assumption that all people identify as either men or women; that there are only two genders.

**Gender non-conforming:** People who express their genders in ways that are not consistent with the societal expectations of their gender assigned at birth. Persons of any gender identity can be perceived as gender non-conforming.

**Heteronormativity:** The organisation of social structures, relationships, and societal institutions based on the assumption that all people are heterosexual.

**Heterosexual:** Refers to a person whose romantic, emotional and/or sexual attraction is to people of a different gender.

**Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia:** These ‘phobias’ refer to the fear, hatred, discomfort with, or mistrust of people who are LGBTQI+. Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia are present in all societies to varying extents.

**Internalised homophobia:** Internalised homophobia is experienced by individuals when they see their SOGIESC as wrong, abnormal, immoral etc.; i.e., society's homophobia is internalised and directed towards themselves.

**Intersex:** An umbrella term to describe people who are born with biological sex characteristics that do not conform to socially and culturally established conceptions of male and female bodies.

**Lesbian:** Refers to a woman whose enduring emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction is to individuals of the same gender.

**Non-binary:** A person whose gender identity falls outside the gender binary. This term can encompass a wide variety of gender identities and experiences.

**Minority stress:** Minority stress is a concept for understanding the mental and physical health disparities experienced by LGBTQI+ people, including the high levels of mental health issues and suicide ideation among LGBTQI+ people. Minority stress is different from the types of stress faced by people in their everyday life – it specifically originates from the excess stress that sexual and gender minorities may experience due to prejudice, discrimination and violence.

**Queer:** Queer can appear as an umbrella term for communities who identify as non-cisgender and non-heterosexual. It can also be used by individuals to describe a wide range of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sexual characteristics. Queer was historically a negative term in English-speaking contexts but has been reclaimed by LGBTQI+ communities in a positive and is often used in a political way.

**Third gender:** Refers to people who do not identify as men or women or whose gender is not perceived to be male or female, and/or to individuals whose gender identity does not match their assigned sex at birth. Some third gender groups have specific social, cultural and economic roles that they play in their respective societies, and their gender identity may or may not be legally recognised.

**Transgender:** A person whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth may identify as transgender. A trans person can have any sexual orientation.

# Executive summary

Violence, and the fear of violence, is an everyday reality for many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people (LGBTQI+).<sup>3</sup> Today, we know more than ever about this violence – its scale, forms, drivers and impacts on those affected. This report provides an overview of this evidence globally, as well as identifies emerging interventions and practice in preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people. The magnitude and severity of violence against LGBTQI+ people revealed by this evidence review is extremely alarming, and show why efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people must be urgently accelerated.

## What is the prevalence, impacts and drivers of violence against LGBTQI+ people?

Studies from all over the world reveal extremely high rates of violence against LGBTQI+ people. Due to differences in evidence available and methodologies used, prevalence data varies between countries, however, the statistics highlight the global scale of the problem. Close to half of LGBTQ people (42%) in the United States have been physically or sexually assaulted as adults.<sup>4</sup> This rises to over half for sexual and gender minorities in Southern and Eastern Africa (56%) and Canada (59%) (lifetime prevalence).<sup>5</sup> In South-Eastern Europe, 32% of LGBTI people have been threatened or targeted by physical and/or sexual violence in the past five years.<sup>6</sup>

Many LGBTQI+ people experience violence repeatedly, often starting early in life. In the United States, 72% of LGBTQ people had experienced childhood emotional abuse, and 41% childhood physical and sexual abuse.<sup>7</sup> Evidence suggests that people who experience multiple forms of marginalisation are at increased risk of violence, and that LBQ women, trans people, non-binary people and intersex people face particularly high rates of violence. In Fiji, 83% of surveyed LBT women and non-binary people experienced physical and/ or sexual violence by an intimate partner.<sup>8</sup> In the Caribbean, 59% of trans and gender diverse people experienced police violence, with people engaged in sex work at highest risk.<sup>9</sup>

Violence against LGBTQI+ people has severe and long-lasting impacts on individuals, communities, and wider society. Violence impacts survivors' mental health, which can manifest in emotional distress, depression and anxiety, suicidal ideation and self-harm, as well as high rates of alcohol and substance use to cope with experiences of violence. In Indonesia, 17% of LGBT people who had been bullied in school had also attempted suicide.<sup>10</sup> Almost all LBQ women in a study in

Uganda had experienced mental health issues in their life, which was often attributed to lifelong experiences of violence and abuse.<sup>11</sup>

The impacts of violence against LGBTQI+ people go beyond individuals' safety and wellbeing. For example, students' school attendance, completion and learning are severely impacted by violence at school, home, and in communities, with long-term consequences on educational and job opportunities for individuals, which in turn can hold back communities and undermine wider economic development.<sup>12</sup>

Violence against LGBTQI+ people is strongly underpinned by homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia, which intersects with gender inequality, racism, and other systems of oppression. Social norms and gender norms have a strong influence on violence against LGBTQI+ people, where non-conformity to often rigid views on masculinities and femininities, and sexual and romantic relationships, is 'punished' with the use of violence.

Anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and hate speech is seen to be on the rise in many countries, which fuel prejudice, negative attitudes, and hate towards LGBTQI+ people, further driving and legitimising violence. In some countries, violence against LGBTQI+ people is officially legitimised and state-sanctioned, where same-sex relationships are criminalised and other restrictive laws expose LGBTQI+ people to risks of violence and harm.

These common drivers of violence and hate towards LGBTQI+ people risk being exacerbated in times of conflict and crisis, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic where some states have used their increased powers to crack down on LGBTQI+ communities.



## What can be done to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people?

Spearheaded by LGBTQI+ organisations and movements, there are a growing number of interventions and initiatives aiming to combat violence against LGBTQI+ people. While the evidence-base on what works to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people is still in its early stages, there is emerging practice and insights to inform the direction for further investment, policy and programming. Not least, LGBTQI+ organisations and movements hold the knowledge and experiences to be able to drive this work in collaboration with actors across multiple sectors in society.

This report highlights examples of interventions and approaches to preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people, and shares emerging lessons from these efforts. The interventions are clustered into approaches at the interpersonal, community, and societal levels, as well as initiatives and strategies at regional and international levels. This is inspired by the Socio-Ecological Model<sup>13</sup> which provides a framework

for understanding risk factors for violence at multiple levels – from the individual to the societal. The model is extensively used in the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) sector, as it helps to identify entry-points and develop approaches that can tackle risk factors in comprehensive ways.

The groupings of drivers and approaches in this report should be seen as indicative and illustrative, as drivers of violence against LGBTQI+ people vary in importance and strength between contexts; and each context and LGBTQI+ movement have their own entry-points for addressing violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC). Drivers of violence are not operating in silo but are rather intertwined and reinforcing each other. As such, efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people must also take place at various levels and involve different sectors and actors in this work.

## Recommendations for preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people

Based on the evidence review and consultations with LGBTQI+ organisations as well as LGBTQI+ rights and gender equality practitioners, the report sets out **recommendations** in seven overarching areas to accelerate efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people, with a number of priorities per area. These are outlined in the section on recommendations, alongside several guiding principles which any actors engaging in work to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people should commit to.

### Areas of recommendations

#### Policy-makers and donors

1. Increase funding in evidence-informed and evidence-generating prevention programming and evaluation
2. Integrate support for survivors within violence prevention programming
3. Support sustainability of LGBTQI+ organisations and movements

#### Practitioners

4. Build on emerging and innovative practice, and carefully adapt to different contexts
5. Innovate in areas where evidence is limited

#### Researchers

6. Support national and local LGBTQI+ organisations' research priorities and agendas, while contributing to building the global evidence base and filling evidence gaps
7. Follow ethical research approaches and data collection

# Drivers and Risk Factors

## Individual

- Overlapping identities and personal characteristics (e.g. sex, gender identity, age, religious identity, ethnicity, disability, HIV status, refugee status) – exposing people to intersecting inequalities
- Adverse childhood experiences of violence
- Attitudes condoning or justifying violence as normal or acceptable

## Interpersonal level

- Family values around 'honour' where LGBTQI+ individuals are perceived to bring shame to the family
- Controlling behaviours within an intimate partner or family relationship
- Isolation and lack of social support

## Community-level

- Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia
- Patriarchal social and gender norms which dictate how women and men should look, behave and interact with each other
- Lack of services and violence reporting mechanisms in communities
- High rates of violence and crime

## Societal level (institutional)

- Laws that criminalise LGBTQI+ people or target the expression of diverse SOGIESC (e.g. the so-called 'propaganda laws')
- Lack of legal gender recognition
- Discrimination in institutions (e.g. health, education, police, legal settings)
- Anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and hate speech by public figures, political and religious leaders
- Media targeting LGBTQI+ people

## Examples of approaches to address drivers and risk factors at different levels

### International and regional level approaches

- Regional partnerships and collaboration to strategise and enhance movement building, and exchange knowledge and evidence on effective approaches to prevent violence
- Global funding to LGBTQI+ organisations and work to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people

### Interpersonal level

- Family-based approaches such as sharing educational resources and guidance with parents of LGBTQI+ children to support a safer home environment
- Interventions to prevent violence within LGBTQI+ people's intimate relationships

**Evidence-base:** Although a growing number of initiatives target violence against LGBTQI+ people at the interpersonal level, these have generally not been evaluated.

### Community-level

- School-based approaches, such as developing policies, curricula, resources and trainings to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ children and youth in schools
- Youth programmes that address homophobic and transphobic attitudes, particularly among young men, through promoting healthy masculinities
- Faith-based approaches that engage faith leaders and organisations to use their beliefs, spirituality, and traditions to advocate for the rights of people of diverse SOGIESC
- Economic empowerment approaches to address poverty among LGBTQI+ communities and enhance social acceptance through supporting LGBTQI+ people to set up businesses and income generating activities
- Online approaches, such as developing online safety policies and online community guidelines, to combat violence against LGBTQI+ people online

**Evidence-base:** More evidence has been generated about community-level approaches than approaches on other levels, particularly school-based programmes and youth programmes which show some evidence of positive impact.

### Societal level (institutional)

- Advocacy for legal reform, such as decriminalisation of same-sex relationships
- Policies to prevent violence recognise LGBTQI+ people as an at-risk group (for instance policies to address VAWG and family violence)
- Health sector interventions, such as banning abusive medical practices, and through broader work to promote LGBTQI+ inclusive and safe services
- Working with law enforcement actors to address stigmatising and discriminatory attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people within these sectors
- Media and awareness raising campaigns aiming to influence public opinion and perception of LGBTQI+ people

**Evidence-base:** These approaches are critical to preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people, however, they have rarely been assessed for impact.

# A note on terminology and framing

A variety of terms are used to describe diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), and those whose SOGIESC are deemed non-normative. Common terminology include variations of SOGIESC (such as SOGI and SOGIE) and LGBTQI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), intersex and others), which also comes in variations such as LGBT, LGBTI, and LGBTQIA depending on whose experiences, identities and characteristics are being centred. Sexual and gender minorities is sometimes also used. No single terminology can account for the diversity of lived experience of people with diverse SOGIESC, and the multifaceted SOGIESC movements and activism around the world. Each set of terminology comes with opportunities and limitations, which are briefly discussed here.

## Diverse SOGIESC

is used to draw attention to the fact that all people have a SOGIESC, but that some people are at risk of discrimination and violence due to non-conformity to heteronormative and gender binary perceptions and structures. SOGIESC terminology recognises that there are people, experiences and struggles that exist across the world which cannot be neatly labelled or captured by variations of the LGBTQI+ acronym. This includes for instance non-binary people and third gender groups who may not identify within a LGBTQI+ framework.

## LGBTQI+

is well known and widely used in a range of contexts; however, it is largely rooted in a Western framework which does not capture the diversity of SOGIESC identities, experiences, and struggles across the world. The '+' that sometimes appears at the end is used to signal that there are many other identities and experiences that cannot be captured by an acronym. Furthermore, LGBTQI+ can give the impression of one 'community' with a shared set of experiences, while there are inequalities and diversity in lived experience among people within the LGBTQI+ spectrum.

## Sexual and gender minorities

typically appears as a broader term to describe people of diverse SOGIESC. The term is not used to refer to minorities in numbers or population size, or to minimise the challenges faced by LGBTQI+ people; but to draw attention to how power imbalances and systematic oppression render people with diverse SOGIESC marginalised and socially excluded to various degrees in different societies.

In every context, there are more nuanced terms and language to describe local realities and understandings of SOGIESC. Variations are not only seen in terminology and language, but also in emphasis on identities, practices and characteristics, as well as in cultural understandings and references to diverse SOGIESC. This includes different ways of understanding the relationship between gender identity and sexual orientation, which in some contexts are seen as distinct categories that relate in specific ways, while in other contexts the relationship between sexuality and gender is more fluid and can be merged into one integrated understanding of who a person is.<sup>14</sup> In short, there is no universal way of understanding and labelling diverse SOGIESC, and it is always advisable to explore the most relevant terminology in the local context and use the words that people use to self-identify.

When presenting evidence from research and previous reports, this report uses the same terminology as in the original source,<sup>15</sup> aiming to accurately reflect the groups on which the research focused. This means a variety of terminology will appear in this report. However, when synthesising evidence and discussing overarching findings, this report will use LGBTQI+ and SOGIESC terminology.

# Understanding intersectionality

This report takes an intersectional approach to understanding how violence on the basis of SOGIESC can overlap with other forms of marginalisation. It includes exploring how the experiences of women with diverse SOGIESC are shaped by both oppression on the basis of their SOGIESC, and by patriarchal norms and misogyny, and how black and ethnic minority LGBTQI+ people are at greater risk of violence due to intersecting racist structures.

While there is increasing recognition of how multiple experiences of marginalisation can compound and exacerbate violence, researchers still grapple with applying an intersectional lens in data collection and analysis, especially related to SOGIESC-based violence in combination with other axis of oppression. While this means that this evidence remains limited, the report draws out intersectional findings where possible.

## Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a concept emerged in the context of understanding African-American women's lived experiences at the intersection of gender-based oppression and racism. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term to highlight the need to understand the compounding effects of experiencing multiple oppressions, as opposed to a single-issue analysis. The concept is useful to understand the experiences of individuals who face intersecting inequalities based in gender inequality, homo, bi and transphobia, dyadism, as well as other interlocking systems of oppression, such as racism, ageism, class, nationalism and ableism. LGBTQI+ people who simultaneously part of other marginalised groups in society may be at elevated risk of violence, face unique forms of violence, and be excluded from service provision.

# Introduction

Violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people (LGBTQI+) people is a human rights violation and a significant threat to global health and development. Studies from all over the world reveal alarming rates of violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), targeting people across the LGBTQI+ spectrum.

Experiences of violence often start in childhood and continue throughout life – at home, in school, in communities, in institutions, and in cyberspace. This report explores the prevalence, drivers and impact of violence against LGBTQI+ people, including physical, sexual, and psychological forms of violence as well as specific forms of violence that target LGBTQI+ people’s SOGIESC, such as conversion practices.

The multiple and complex crises the world is facing today, including COVID-19, climate change and conflicts, are having disproportionate effects on LGBTQI+ people. The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, and some governments have used increased state powers during lockdowns to crack down on LGBTQI+ communities.<sup>16</sup> In some countries, LGBTQI+ people have also been blamed for ‘causing’ the pandemic. This is not a new phenomenon, as LGBTQI+ people have repeatedly been scapegoated in times of crisis and natural disasters, leading to heightened stigma and risk of violence.

Past experience has shown that LGBTQI+ people face increased risk of violence in humanitarian crises, conflict and displacement settings, where they also tend to be excluded from accessing services and humanitarian aid as these systems are typically set up in heteronormative and gender binary ways. LGBTQI+ people whose gender identity and expression do not match the gender marker on their identity document, or who are part of family and social structures that do not conform to traditional views on relationships and families, are at significant risk of being left behind in humanitarian response. Stories from Syria, Afghanistan and most recently Ukraine, reveal the acute threats and risks that LGBTQI+ people face in conflict and when fleeing war.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, LGBTQI+ people continue to suffer attacks and threats outside the spotlights of the most acute crises, as many countries see ongoing backlash and increases in hate speech that target LGBTQI+ communities – particularly trans people. While recent decades have seen a great deal of progress in terms of social and political acceptance of LGBTQI+ people, this has not been universal across the world, or for all LGBTQI+ communities. Many states continue<sup>18</sup> to criminalise same-sex sexual acts and restrict gender diversity, which penalties ranging from prison sentences to execution. LGBTQI+ communities share experiences of violence, but those who face intersecting inequalities are at heightened risk of violence.

Today, we know more than ever about violence against LGBTQI+ people – its magnitude, forms, drivers and impacts on those affected. While data gaps remain, the existing evidence paints a clear picture – LGBTQI+ people across the world face violence and abuse, and live with threats and fear of violence being directed their way because of who they are and how they exist in this world. Beyond the severe impacts of violence on individuals’ safety, wellbeing and rights, there is also increasing recognition of how violence has ripple effects in society and prevents people’s full social, political and economic participation in society.

The expansion in evidence on violence against LGBTQI+ people has not been matched by a similar growth in evidence on what works to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people. Whilst global, national and local LGBTQI+ organisations have relentlessly led efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people to date, the lack of funding and dedicated support to this work has held back progress. Despite few evaluated programmes and interventions, several approaches and innovative interventions are emerging from different contexts.

This report presents some of the existing evidence on violence against LGBTQI+ people, and what has been tried to prevent this violence. It is based on an evidence review<sup>19</sup> which focused on understanding violence against LGBTQI+ people and identifying promising interventions and practice in preventing such violence. While systematic evidence of these efforts remains limited, there is a wealth of knowledge and expertise possessed by LGBTQI+ activists and organisations who are on the frontlines of preventing violence. The recommendations set out at the end of this report have been crafted in consultation with 12 LGBTQI+ organisations, drawing on their interpretation of the evidence and insights into what it would take to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people.

66  
Experiences  
of violence  
often start  
in childhood  
and continue  
throughout life 99

Parallel to the histories of violence against LGBTQI+ people run histories of resilience, survival and ongoing struggles for the right to live free and equally. We hope that this report can support donors, practitioners and researchers with evidence and insights to accelerate efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people, working together with, and drawing on the strengths and capacities of, LGBTQI+ organisations and communities. Evidence from the broader field of preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) has shown that violence is preventable when actors join efforts to generate evidence, and invest in contextually appropriate and well-designed interventions.

## Violence against LGBTQI+ people – what does the global evidence say?

Violence and abuse on the basis of SOGIESC persists in every corner of the world. Studies from different regions and countries demonstrate that LGBTQI+ people consistently face high levels of violence, ranging from physical assault, torture and targeted killing to so-called ‘corrective’ rape and other forms of sexual violence to threats, bullying and verbal harassment. The violence is perpetrated by family members, intimate partners, peers, strangers, faith institutions, and various other non-state and state actors.

While there is insufficient data to establish global prevalence estimates of violence against LGBTQI+ people, quantitative and qualitative evidence provide important insight into the magnitude of this violence in different contexts, and help us to understand its manifestations, drivers and impact.

### A continuum of violence

Violence often begins in childhood and continues through adolescence and into adult life<sup>20</sup>, through various non-related and related events. Violence against LGBTQI+ people must be understood both across the life course and on a continuum. In this report, forms of violence are largely presented separately; however, in reality they are often co-occurring and many LGBTQI+ people experience multiple forms of violence repeatedly in their lives. For example, more than half of lesbian and bisexual women surveyed in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa had experienced any form of sexual violence more than once.<sup>21</sup>

### Box 1 A continuum of violence – evidence from Iran

Research on violence against LGBTI people in Iran found that respondents face violence “across all parts of their lives with instances combining and intersecting to create an existence in which LGBTI people are trapped in a life cycle of violence”.<sup>22</sup> Violence often starts at home, where family members are the perpetrators of violence against LGBTI children and youth. In the school environment, violence by peers, teachers and the school administration reduces learning and leads to dropout, which in turn negatively impacts employment opportunities. Many respondents continued to experience violence and discrimination in the workplace. The challenges in school and workplaces can in turn lead LGBTI people to being financially dependent on violent families or partners. In this way, intertwined challenges create a continuum of violence in LGBTI people’s lives. Despite these challenges, 35% of the respondents in Iran were hopeful to break the cycle of violence.<sup>23</sup>

# A continuum of violence in LGBTQI+ people's lives

## Violence in childhood

Including **family-based violence**, **school-based violence** and **bullying**, and multiple forms of **adverse childhood experiences**, such as so-called **conversion practices**.

 **72%** of LGBTQ people in the US experienced emotional abuse in childhood

 **41%** of LGBTQ people in the US experienced physical and sexual abuse in childhood

## LGBTQI+ youth

### 18-24 year olds

Face an increased risk of violence


Leading to **mental health impacts**, **reduced learning**, **absenteeism** and **school dropout**, and **family rejection** and **homelessness**


## Violence in adulthood

**24%** in Iran, 24% of LGBTI people had experienced violence at work

Violence continues through adolescence and into adulthood, including in **intimate relationships**, and at **workplaces**

Leading to **livelihood challenges** and **economic impacts**, **absence from work**, **lower participation in economic, social and political activities**, and **risk of dependency** on violent family members and partners

 **18%** of LGBT staff in the UK have been the target for negative comments or conduct from colleagues in the last year because they are LGBT

 **12%** of trans people in the UK have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year because of being trans

## Violence in childhood:<sup>24</sup>

Violence against LGBTQI+ people often begins in childhood. The violence takes place at home, in communities, in educational settings and by actors who engage in so-called 'conversion' practices. Several studies in North America have found higher prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in LGBTQI+ individuals compared with heterosexual and cisgender people. Recent population-based data in the United States found that 72% of LGBTQ people had experienced childhood emotional abuse, and 41% physical and sexual abuse respectively in childhood.<sup>25</sup> The prevalence of ACEs was high among all LGBTQ groups, with transgender respondents and LBQ cisgender women reporting particularly high prevalence of such experiences.

## Intergenerational cycles of violence:

Violence against children not only impacts children's present life and wellbeing, it also has intergenerational effects. A multi-country study on 'Men and Violence in Asia and the Pacific' found that women who have experienced childhood trauma were at greater risk of facing intimate partner violence (IPV) as adults, and that men's childhood experiences of violence increased the risk of perpetrating IPV as adults.<sup>26</sup> There is still limited research on intergenerational cycles of violence in LGBTQI+ people's lives. However, researchers in Canada have found this pattern reflected in sexual minority women, where 63% of sexual minority women in a household survey had been victims of sexual assault in childhood, and just slightly less had experienced physical assault as a child.<sup>27</sup> 81% of the survivors of childhood violence indicated that they had experienced IPV as an adult.

## LGBTQI+ youth:

Young LGBTQI+ people are at increased risk of violence. A large-scale survey in the European Union (EU), North Macedonia and Serbia found higher rates of physical or sexual attacks experienced by young LGBTQI people (18-24 years) than LGBTQI people of other ages.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, research in Eastern and Southern Africa (Botswana, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) found that respondents aged 18-24 reported higher rates of past year violence compared to respondents over age 25.<sup>29</sup>

## Violence in adulthood:

Most of the existing evidence on violence against LGBTQI+ people focuses on adult LGBTQI+ people's experiences of violence. The evidence cuts across spheres and forms of violence as violence can take place anywhere and involve various perpetrators. Many people spend a substantial part of adult life at work, which is one sphere where LGBTQI+ people are at risk of violence and harassment. A survey in the UK found that 18% of LGBT staff have been the target of negative comments or conduct from colleagues in the last year because they are LGBT, and 12% of trans people have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year because of being trans.<sup>30</sup>

## Not a homogenous experience

In addition to age, other intersecting identities, social status and life experiences shape LGBTQI+ people's risk of facing discrimination and violence. This is a result of how multiple forms of oppressions interact and compound each other, as described by the concept of intersectionality.

Evidence indicates incredibly high levels of violence across LGBTQI+ communities, and it is not possible to say that one group experiences the highest rates of violence or are at most risk of violence, as the nature and prevalence of violence against different LGBTQI+ communities vary by context. However, several studies have found sexual minority women, trans people and intersex people to be at an elevated risk of violence.

- Lesbian and bisexual women experience high levels of physical and sexual violence, including IPV. Several studies have noted particularly high rates of IPV reported by bisexual women.<sup>31</sup>
- Transgender people are consistently found to be at high risk of violence. Where disaggregated data exists, this reveals that both trans women and trans men experience high levels of violence.<sup>32</sup>
- The small number of studies that have included a focus on intersex people's experiences of violence suggest high levels of sexual violence.<sup>33</sup>
- Evidence on non-binary people's experiences of violence is extremely scarce. However, evidence suggest similar rates of violence as experienced by transgender people or higher.<sup>34</sup>

While a relatively small number of studies have adopted an intersectional approach to understanding violence in the lives of LGBTQI+ people, existing evidence suggests that experiencing intersecting inequalities contribute to heightened risk of violence.

### Race and ethnicity

Research in multiple settings have found that black and ethnic minority respondents experience higher rates of violence. In a survey in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa, black and ethnic minority lesbian and bisexual women were more likely to report experiences of forced sex than white respondents.<sup>35</sup> In the United States, transgender people who are American Indian, Middle Eastern, and multiracial reported higher rates of violence.<sup>36</sup>

### Indigenous people

In Canada, sexual minority people who belong to an Indigenous group experienced extremely high rates of physical and sexual violence. Since age 15, 73% of Indigenous sexual minorities had been physically assaulted, and 65% had been sexually assaulted.<sup>37</sup>

### Disability

Research in North America shows that sexual and gender minority people with a disability are at elevated risk of violence. In Canada, sexual minority people with disabilities were more likely to report that they had been physically assaulted (55%) and sexually assaulted (46%) since age 15 than those who did not have a disability.<sup>38</sup> In the United States, transgender people with disabilities reported higher rates of sexual assault and IPV in their lifetime (61% for both) than people without disabilities (54% and 47% respectively in the general sample).<sup>39</sup>

### Living with HIV

Sexual and gender minority people in Southern and Eastern Africa who are living with HIV reported notably higher levels of violence compared to respondents not living with HIV.<sup>40</sup>

Other sections will also pick up on intersectionality, including the situation for LGBTQI+ people who are migrants and refugees, and who experience homelessness.





## The scale of violence against LGBTQI+ people

Worldwide, LGBTQI+ people face high levels of violence. The map features survey findings on LGBTQI+ people's experiences of harassment and violence in several countries. Due to differences in methodology, these statistics are not comparable; however, they highlight the global scale of the problem and demonstrate that it occurs in all regions in the world. Further details on research designs, sample size and characteristics are provided in the endnotes.

**Click on the button to see survey data from specific countries**

# Where does violence against LGBTQI+ people take place?

SOGIESC-based violence is perpetrated by a range of state and non-state actors, and takes place in various settings across the private and public sphere, as well as in cyberspace.

## Cyberspace

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- Online hate speech
- Online abuse and harassment
- Use of online technology and social media to perpetrate offline violence

# 78%

of surveyed LGBTQI+ people in the **UK** had experienced anti-LGBTQI+ hate crime and hate speech online in the past five years

## In humanitarian and conflict settings and on the move

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- Violence in host communities
- Violence in migrant communities
- Violence by aid workers
- Violence by armed actors
- Family-based violence

More than half of interviewed **Syrian** LGBT refugees in **Lebanon** had been physically attacked, and

# 29%

 had been **threatened, extorted, or blackmailed**

## At home

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- Family violence
- Intimate partner violence

# In Fiji, 81%

of LBT women and non-binary people in Fiji experienced **physical** and/or **sexual violence** by an intimate partner

## At work

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- Negative comments or conduct
- Sexual harassment and abuse
- Physical attacks

# In Iran, 24%

of LGBTI people in a survey said they have experienced violence in a work setting.

## In public

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- Hate crimes

# 52%

of surveyed LGBTI people in **Iran** had experienced violence in public areas

## In institutions

### FORMS OF VIOLENCE

- School-based violence
- Violence in healthcare settings
- Violence by police and law enforcement
- Violence in religious institutions

In **Thailand**,

# 56%

of **transgender** and **same-sex** attracted secondary school students had experienced bullying *and*

# 24%

had been sexually harassed.

## 🏠 At home

The home can be an unsafe environment for LGBTQI+ people whose family members are not accepting, and for those who live with a violent partner. During the COVID-19 pandemic, levels of domestic violence intensified as lockdowns and stay-at-home measures confined those at risk of, or affected by violence with abusive family members and partners for extended periods of time and heightened other drivers of violence such as economic insecurity.<sup>54</sup> This include LGBTQI+ people, many of whom were furthermore distanced from chosen families and social networks, increasing feelings of isolation and fear.<sup>55</sup> In France, LGBT organisations warned about an ‘unprecedented’ number of young LGBT people in need of shelter due to family violence and rejection during the first year of COVID-19.<sup>56</sup>

**Family violence:** While all LGBTQI+ people are at risk of family violence, lesbian and bisexual women are in some contexts at specific risk due to patriarchal norms that subject women and girls to male family member’s control. Trans men can also be affected when they are incorrectly perceived as women by their families. In Cambodia, the fear of family shame has been identified as a strong driver behind parents’ use of violence towards lesbian and bisexual women, and trans men (LBT). 56% of surveyed LBT people in Cambodia experienced emotional violence by a family member, alongside other forms of family violence including physical violence, forced detention at home, economic violence and forced marriage.<sup>57</sup>

**Intimate partner violence (IPV):** In addition to being at risk of the same forms of IPV as heterosexual and cisgender people, LGBTQI+ people are at risk of violence by a partner targeting their SOGIESC, such as saying that someone is not a ‘real woman’ or ‘real man’, threatening to ‘out’ them, or restricting access to hormones or other treatments. Global statistics show different rates of IPV among LGBTQI+ people:

- A review of studies with representative samples found that lifetime prevalence of IPV varied between 43%-57% among bisexual women; averaged 32% among lesbian women; and between 25%-33% among gay men. While male and female partners perpetrate IPV against sexual minority women, initial evidence suggest that male partners perpetrate IPV at higher rates – one study found that 90% of bisexual women reported only male perpetrators of physical IPV, rape, and/or stalking, and almost a third of lesbian survivors of IPV reported one or more male perpetrators.<sup>58</sup>
- Trans people’s experiences of IPV are generally less studied. However, studies from mainly the United States suggests a median lifetime prevalence of 38% for physical IPV and 25% for sexual IPV, with similar rates of IPV reported by trans women and trans men.<sup>59</sup>

LGBTQI+ people in forced marriages are at particular risk of IPV. A study with sexual and gender minorities in Eastern and Southern Africa found that being in a forced marriage was strongly associated with higher likelihood of violence.<sup>60</sup> Research in Asia has identified this as a particularly affecting sexual minority women and trans men due to the power imbalances vis-à-vis the husband and lack of support by family members, who often arrange the forced marriage.<sup>61</sup>

## 🏢 At work

Many LGBTQI+ people face discrimination, abuse and violence at work, which can be perpetrated by colleagues, managers, clients, customers and service users. A survey with LGBTI people in Iran found that 24% have experienced violence in a work setting.<sup>62</sup> Research in the UK has found that the risk of facing workplace harassment and violence increases for LGBT staff from ethnic minorities, who are trans, and who are living with a disability.<sup>63</sup>

## 🎓 In institutions

Institutions meant to provide essential services, support and protection are not always safe for people with diverse SOGIESC but can instead put LGBTQI+ people at risk of discrimination and violence.

**School:** Studies have found that about half of LGBTQI+ students face bullying and stigma, and that LGBTQI+ children and youth are at increased risk of bullying and violence in school compared to non-LGBTQI+ peers.<sup>64</sup> Research across countries in the Asia-Pacific have found that most LGBT students experience bullying and violence, with verbal bullying being the most common form reported.<sup>65</sup> In Thailand, 56% of transgender and same-sex attracted secondary school students had experienced bullying, and 24% had been sexually harassed.<sup>66</sup>

**Healthcare settings:** Healthcare settings are potential sites of abuse and violence against LGBTQI+ people, including verbal violence, neglect, and denial of treatment.<sup>67</sup> Fear of being reported to authorities and being outed by healthcare workers limit and delay LGBTQI+ people’s healthcare seeking, which risks having detrimental effects.

In addition to violence and abuse during routine healthcare visits, LGBTQI+ people are targeted for specific forms of medical violence, including forced sterilisation and forced examinations. Researchers have documented forced anal examinations on gay men and trans women in multiple countries such as Cameroon, Egypt, Kenya, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Zambia.<sup>68</sup>

Intersex people are specifically targeted for non-consensual surgeries and medical interventions, often with harmful psychological and physical consequences. Surgeries on intersex babies are often conducted on social grounds (*i.e. the perceived need to conform to a gender binary*) rather than for medical reasons. Data on the prevalence of non-consensual medical interventions on intersex people is very limited, however one survey in the EU, North Macedonia and Serbia found that 62% of intersex respondents did not provide, and were not asked for, their own or their parents' consent before their first surgery to modify their sex characteristics.<sup>69</sup>

**Law enforcement actors:** Surveys show varying rates of violence by law enforcement officers: 5% of LBT women and non-binary people in Fiji reported violence by the police; 8% of trans women in Thailand reported harassment by the police; and 20% of LGBTI people in Iran reported violence perpetrated by the legal system.<sup>70</sup> The violence is perpetrated both on a day-to-day basis as

part of systematic targeting of LGBTQI+ people as well as in organised crackdowns on LGBTQI+ communities, such as the one seen in Chechnya in 2017 where particularly gay men were subject to abduction, violence and torture in unofficial detention centres.<sup>71</sup>

**Religious institutions and places of worship:** Religious and spiritual leaders play a role in anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and speech across regions, fuelling homophobia and transphobia, and in some cases inciting violence.<sup>72</sup> In a study on the lived realities of LBT women and non-binary people in Fiji, participants described how homophobic and transphobic insults are spoken or shouted from the pulpit, and that places of worship can be sites where violence is perpetrated by faith-based leaders and family members alike as they join in forced prayer sessions, laying of hands and sexual and physical assault.<sup>73</sup> Religious groups and leaders have also been found to play a role in so-called conversion practices.

## Violence perpetrated with the intention to 'convert', 'correct', or 'cure' LGBTQI+ people

### SO-CALLED 'CONVERSION' PRACTICES

So-called 'conversion' practices, also known as SOGIESC change efforts, include a range of harmful practices that are perpetrated with an intention to 'cure', 'treat' or 'convert' people with diverse SOGIESC into having cisgender and/ or heterosexual identities. Perpetrators of conversion practices include religious groups and leaders, medical and mental health practitioners, traditional and spiritual healers, self-helps groups, family members and community members.<sup>74</sup>

Conversion practices have been documented in some form in all regions of the world, however, prevalence data exists only in a few countries in the Global North. Nationally representative data in the United States show that 20% of transgender adults, 9% of GBQ cis men, and 6% of LBQ cis women have experiences of sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts.<sup>75</sup>

### SO-CALLED 'CORRECTIVE' SEXUAL VIOLENCE

A particular form of violence targeting LGBTQI+ people is so-called 'corrective' sexual violence, where people with diverse SOGIESC are targeted for sexual violence with the intention to 'correct' or 'convert' their SOGIESC. In the UK, almost a quarter (24%) of surveyed LGBT+ people had experienced sexual violence that they believe was intended to 'convert' them or to punish them.<sup>76</sup> This was reported by respondents of all SOGIESC, however, intersex people (50%), trans men (35%), asexual people (35%), non-binary people (32%) and trans women (30%) were more likely to have experienced this.

So-called 'corrective' rape has been documented against sexual minority women and trans men in qualitative studies across different regions.<sup>77</sup> Research with black lesbians, bisexual women and trans men in South Africa highlights that this violence is often brutal and repeated, and is part of a continuum of violence faced by sexual minority women and trans men.

### In public

Various forms of violence against LGBTQI+ people take place in public settings. Sometimes the perpetrators are known to the survivors, other times they are targeted by strangers based on their perceived SOGIESC. Violence motivated by the offender's hostility or prejudice towards LGBTQI+ people is categorised as hate crimes.<sup>78</sup> Some countries collect statistics on reported SOGIESC-motivated hate crimes, however, the reported cases should be considered the tip of the iceberg since underreporting is likely to be widespread in all countries due factors such as normalisation of violence and lack of trust in the police. Existing data suggests that the figures are likely to be high – for example, a survey in Iran found that 52% of LGBTI respondents had experienced violence in public areas.<sup>79</sup>

### In humanitarian and conflict settings and on the move

Violence against LGBTQI+ people have been documented in humanitarian emergencies, including in the aftermaths of natural disasters, where LGBTQI+ people are also at risk of being excluded from accessing humanitarian aid and services as these systems typically reinforce heteronormative and gender binary structures.<sup>80</sup> For example, LGBTQI+ people whose SOGIESC does not match the gender marker on their identity document, or who are not part of family structures that conform to traditional views on relationships and families, are at significant risk of being left behind in humanitarian response. Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, there were reports of increased levels of violence against LGBTQI+ people, especially in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). Overcrowding and inadequate lighting, shelter and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities increased the risk of violence for women, girls and LGBTQI+ people in the camps. Local LGBTQI+ organisations documented cases of sexual violence against LGBTQI+ people, including so-called 'corrective' rape.<sup>81</sup>

Throughout history, LGBTQI+ people have been repeatedly blamed for 'causing' crisis events and disasters. This has been witnessed in Haiti in multiple occasions, where LGBTQI+ people were blamed for the 2010 earthquake<sup>82</sup> as well as the more recent 2021 earthquake.<sup>83</sup> This phenomenon has also been seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, where LGBTQI+ people have been the targets of scapegoating in multiple countries, including Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, Liberia, Russia, Uganda, Ukraine, the United States, and Zimbabwe, leading to heightened stigma and prejudice, and sometimes violence.<sup>84</sup>

LGBTQI+ people in conflict-affected settings, humanitarian settings, and those who are not safe in their countries, may be forced to leave their homes in search of safety. LGBTQI+ people on the move risk being targeted for violence due to their SOGIESC status as well as refugee status. Violence stems from multiple sources, including family members, traffickers, host communities, migrant communities, aid workers and service providers.<sup>85</sup> Some find themselves migrating to countries which are only marginally safer for LGBTQI+ people – as seen for example in the case of Syrian LGBTQI+ migration to Lebanon. A 2014 study found that more than half of interviewed Syrian LGBT refugees in Lebanon had been physically attacked, and 29% had been threatened, extorted, or blackmailed.<sup>86</sup>

### Cyberspace

With the expansion of the internet and use of social media, the risk of violence and abuse that LGBTQI+ people face in their offline lives has extended into online spaces. While there is limited evidence on the extent of online violence against LGBTQI+ people, a smaller number of studies indicate that this type of violence is common. A survey with LGBTQ people in Brazil found that 36% of respondents had experienced aggression online, with higher rates reported by black LGBTQ respondents (53%).<sup>87</sup> In the UK, 78% of surveyed LGBT+ people had experienced anti-LGBT+ hate crime and hate speech online in the last 5 years. 93% of trans people reported experiencing online abuse, compared to 70% of cisgender LGB people.<sup>88</sup>

Online technology and social media are also used to facilitate offline violence against LGBTQI+ people. LGBTQI+ people's online activities and digital information can be used by law enforcement actors and security forces to target and arrest LGBTQI+ people; where for example contacts lists, text messages, photos and videos, dating apps and other digital information is accessed and used as 'evidence' against LGBTQI+ people. This tactic has for example been used by Syrian government forces and armed groups to attack and arrest LGBTQI+ individuals. There are also cases where members of government security agents and non-state armed groups have posed as gay men on apps to lure users into in-person meetings with the intention to arrest, kidnap, blackmail, perpetrate violence and even kill.<sup>89</sup>

# Drivers of violence against LGBTQI+ people

Several factors can increase the risk of violence against LGBTQI+ people – these vary by context and forms of violence, however, there are some factors which are commonly found across geographies, and social, cultural and political contexts. Most of these are underpinned by systematic gender inequality and patriarchal norms which are prevalent in societies across the world. These reinforce a gender binary which typically come with rigid views on masculinity and femininity, and the risk of violence against anyone who are perceived to defy related norms and expectations.

Level	Drivers and risk factors
<b>Individual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overlapping identities and personal characteristics (e.g. <i>sex, gender identity, age, religious identity, ethnicity, disability, HIV status, refugee status</i>) – exposing people to intersecting inequalities</li> <li>• Adverse childhood experiences of violence</li> <li>• Attitudes condoning or justifying violence as normal or acceptable</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family values around ‘honour’ where LGBTQI+ individuals are perceived to bring shame to the family</li> <li>• Controlling behaviours within an intimate partner or family relationship</li> <li>• Isolation and lack of social support</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia</li> <li>• Patriarchal social and gender norms which dictate how women and men should look, behave and interact with each other</li> <li>• Lack of services and violence reporting mechanisms in communities</li> <li>• High rates of violence and crime</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laws that criminalise LGBTQI+ people or target the expression of diverse SOGIESC (e.g. <i>the so-called ‘propaganda laws’</i>)</li> <li>• Lack of legal gender recognition</li> <li>• Discrimination in institutions (e.g. <i>health, education, police, legal settings</i>)</li> <li>• Anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and hate speech by public figures, political and religious leaders</li> <li>• Media targeting and public outings of LGBTQI+ people</li> </ul>
<b>Context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict, crisis and humanitarian emergencies – exacerbating other drivers</li> </ul>



...LGBTQI+ people who are black and ethnic minority, belong to an Indigenous group, and who live with a disability or with HIV are at elevated risk of violence.



The drivers and risk factors highlighted below are not intended to provide an exhaustive overview of all drivers of violence against LGBTQI+ people, but are selected to shine light on some selected key drivers, and emerging evidence of the pathways between these drivers and risk of violence against LGBTQI+ people.

### Intersecting identities

LGBTQI+ people may be targeted for violence on the basis of their SOGIESC, as well as other personal characteristics and identities. Research shows that LGBTQI+ people who are black and ethnic minority<sup>90</sup>, belong to an Indigenous group<sup>91</sup>, and who live with a disability<sup>92</sup> or with HIV<sup>93</sup> are at elevated risk of violence.

### Adverse Childhood Experiences of violence

Studies in North America have found that LGBTQI+ people have higher rates of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) than heterosexual and cisgender people.<sup>94</sup> Violence in childhood in turn increases the risk of violence perpetration and victimisation in adulthood – leading to intergenerational cycles of violence.<sup>95</sup>

### Family values and ‘honour’

Families can be strong guardians of patriarchal norms, as these are typically reproduced in family structures. In some contexts, the notion of ‘family honour’ appears as a strong driver of violence against LGBTQI+ people, where LGBTQI+ individuals may be perceived to bring shame to the family, and threaten to damage the family’s honour. Family members who perpetrate violence may also be driven by religious reasons, and other moral codes that are prevalent in their context. Global research on conversion practices found that protecting family honour was perceived to be the leading driver of such practices in Asia, while in Latin America and the Caribbean, religious reasons dominated.<sup>96</sup>

### Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia

It is widely understood that homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and interphobia drive violence against LGBTQI+ people. These ‘phobias’ refer to the fear, hatred, discomfort with, or mistrust of people who are LGBTQI+. In societies where homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia are present (which is in all societies to varying extents), non-conformity to social and gender norms render LGBTQI+ people at risk of violence – the more an individual transgress or challenge norms, the more they are typically at risk of being targeted. These phobias further intersect with gender inequality, racism, and other systems of oppression.

### Social norms and gender norms

Much violence against LGBTQI+ people can be traced to social norms and gender norms which dictate expectations about how women and men should look, behave and interact with each other. These are based on an assumption that only two distinct genders exist – ‘women’ and ‘men’. This gender binary is one of the pillars upholding heteronormativity, which is the organisation of social structures, relationships, and societal institutions based on the assumption that all people are heterosexual. The gender binary and heteronormativity prescribe rigid views on masculinity and femininity, gender roles, and sexual and romantic relationships. Transgression of these norms can trigger violence as a way to ‘punish’ LGBTQI+ people.

In research with trans women and men who have sex with men in Latin America and the Caribbean, most survivors of violence believed that the violence they had faced had been connected to challenging rigid views on what it means to be a ‘man’ or a ‘woman’. Some respondents described that they had changed their appearance and expression to conform with prevailing norms, in attempts to reduce the risk of violence.<sup>97</sup>

Transgression of these norms can trigger violence as a way to ‘punish’ LGBTQI+ people.

## Box 2 The intersection of patriarchal norms and gender inequality

While all LGBTQI+ people are subject to discrimination and violence due to patriarchal norms and structures, women and girls with diverse SOGIESC, and in some cases trans men (when they are incorrectly perceived to be women) can be particularly subject to gender-based oppression in societies where patriarchal values support highly conservative/traditional gender roles. Interviews with LGBTQI activists in Tunisia shed light on how family control of LBQ women is closely tied to the general controlling of women, and policing of women's sexuality. Activists described that a woman who has sex outside marriage is considered unacceptable – however, a woman who has sex outside marriage with another woman is considered double stigma and taboo.<sup>98</sup>

The controlling of women and girls by families and wider society can manifest in multiple forms of violence against sexual minority women and trans people. For example, lesbian women in a study in India reported surveillance by family members, having their freedom of movement restricted, monitoring of mobile phones, and restrictions of social contacts as means of control by unaccepting families.<sup>99</sup>

Many societies put strong expectations on women to become wives and mothers. As a consequence, sexual minority women and trans men (when they are incorrectly perceived to be women) may face high pressure to marry, and risk being subject to threats and violence if they do not fulfil these expectations.

### High rates of violence and crime

Alarming levels and severity of violence against LGBTQI+ people can also be found in countries with high overall rates of violence, such as Brazil and South Africa. Research with black lesbians and trans men in South Africa has highlighted that the brutal cases of so-called 'corrective' sexual violence, which sometimes escalates into murder, must be understood in the wider context of extremely high rates of violence against women and girls, especially black women.<sup>100</sup> Brazil, despite its progressive legislation, has seen the largest numbers of recorded cases of LGBTQI+ people being murdered for several consecutive years, with black trans women being overrepresented in these statistics.<sup>101</sup>

### Criminalisation

Criminalisation violates human rights and exposes LGBTQI+ people to risks of arrest, detention, persecution, and imprisonment – and in the most repressive states, death penalty. It also sanctions the use of state violence against LGBTQI+ people, for example using forced 'examinations' to allegedly 'prove' same-sex sexual activity upon arrest. This also allows wider police violence and abuse against LGBTQI+ people to go unchecked. Furthermore, it offers opportunities for perpetrators to blackmail, extort and in other ways threaten and intimidate LGBTQI+ people, as reporting LGBTQI+ people to authorities and 'outing' them can have dire consequences. According to the 2020<sup>102</sup> state-sponsored homophobia report, 67 UN Member States have provisions criminalising consensual same-sex conduct.<sup>103</sup>

### Other anti-LGBTQI+ laws

Other repressive laws that target the expression of sexual and gender diversity include so-called 'propaganda' laws, which typically restrict the sharing of content and views that depict and support sexual and gender diversity, as seen in for instance Russia and several states in the United States. As of the end of 2020, at least 42 UN member states had legal barriers for freedom of expression on issues related to sexual and gender diversity in place.<sup>104</sup> Criminalisation and repressive laws send a message that legitimises violence against LGBTQI+ people.

### Lack of legal recognition

Lack of legal recognition of gender identity can exacerbate the risk of violence faced by trans and gender diverse people. Research with trans and gender diverse communities in the Caribbean highlights that not having documentation that matches gender identity and expression puts trans and gender diverse people at increased risk of harassment, arrest, extortion and police violence.<sup>105</sup>

### Anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and hate speech

Perpetrated by politicians, religious leaders and other influential figures in society, anti-LGBTQI+ rhetoric and hate speech fuel negative attitudes and hate towards people with diverse SOGIESC. In a survey that measured violence against LGBTQ people during and after Brazil's 2018 presidential campaign, over 50% of respondents



reported having experienced some form of violence due to their sexual orientation – 92% claimed that such violence increased following the election of President Bolsonaro who has been outspoken against LGBTQI+ people’s rights.<sup>106</sup> Anti-LGBTQI rhetoric and hate speech is on the rise in many parts of the world including in Europe, where it appears to be part of increasingly coordinated efforts, putting LGBTQI+ people and organisations under increased attack.<sup>107</sup>

**Media**

Media actors can fuel prejudice and hate towards people with diverse SOGIESC, and incite violence. Some countries have even seen cases of public outings, where LGBTQI+ people have had their names, pictures and other personal information published by media outlets, putting them at risk of arrest, harassment and violent attacks.<sup>108</sup> Research on the lived experiences of LBQ women in Uganda has highlighted experiences of being forcefully outed on local media platforms, which often led to family rejection.<sup>109</sup>

## Impacts of violence

Violence against LGBTQI+ people has severe consequences for individuals, communities, and wider society. At the same time, LGBTQI+ survivors of violence continue to face barriers to accessing support and specialised services to support healing and recovery.

Examples of the impact of violence on LGBTQI+ survivors				
Physical health	Mental health	Sexual and reproductive health	Educational impacts	Financial wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acute injuries</li> <li>Pain</li> <li>Bruising</li> <li>Scarring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional distress</li> <li>Depression and anxiety, PTSD</li> <li>Suicidal ideation and self-harm</li> <li>Alcohol and substance use</li> <li>Minority stress</li> <li>Internalised homophobia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS</li> <li>Unwanted pregnancies and abortions, including those that are unsafe</li> <li>Irreversible modifications of sexual characteristics and reproductive systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced learning</li> <li>Absenteeism</li> <li>School dropout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced income</li> <li>Homelessness</li> </ul>

**Mental health**

Many survivors of violence experience emotional distress, depression and anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal ideation and self-harm, as well as high rates of alcohol and substance use. Almost all LBQ women in a study in Uganda had experienced mental health issues in their life.<sup>110</sup> This was often attributed to lifelong experiences of violence and related challenges, including childhood neglect and abuse, and IPV. Many respondents reported self-harm and suicidal ideation, as well as using alcohol and other substances.

**Minority stress**

The ongoing fear of, and experiences of, violence contribute to excessive stress in LGBTQI+ populations. ‘Minority stress’ is a concept for understanding the mental and physical health disparities experienced by LGBTQI+ people, including high levels of mental health issues and suicide ideation. Minority stress is a unique form of stress originating from the culminative effects of discrimination that LGBTQI+ people may face. Minority stress can be exaggerated in individuals who conceal their SOGIESC to avoid discrimination and violence.

### HIV risk

Violence against LGBTQI+ people is linked to HIV risk in multiple and complex ways, which has been particularly studied among men who have sex with men and trans women who are disproportionately affected by HIV globally.<sup>111</sup> For example, in Nepal systematic discrimination leaves trans women with few viable employment options, leading many to engage in sex work, which is associated with violence and harassment by the police, including sexual violence. Police targeting of trans women in turn prevents condom use, as carrying condoms is seen as ‘proof’ of engaging in sex work – further increasing HIV risk.<sup>112</sup>

There is less evidence on the linkages between violence and HIV among LBQ women and trans men. However, smaller studies have highlighted that sexual violence (including so-called ‘corrective’ rape), IPV, and engagement in sex work, are risk factors for HIV also among lesbian and bisexual women and trans men.<sup>113</sup> In a study with lesbian and bisexual women in Southern Africa where 31% of respondents reported experiences of sexual violence; 19% reported experiences of transactional sex; and 47% reported that they had engaged in consensual heterosexual sex – the self-reported HIV prevalence was 10%.<sup>114</sup> Experiences of sexual violence were associated with known HIV status.

### Impact of school-based violence

School-based violence and bullying have impacts on LGBTQI+ students’ mental health, risk behaviours, school absence and dropout, and academic performance. In Indonesia, 17% of LGBT individuals who had been bullied in school reported having attempted suicide.<sup>115</sup> In China, 59% of LGBT respondents reported that bullying had negatively affected their academic performance, 10% reported having skipped class, and 3% dropped out of school.<sup>116</sup> A study on the impact of bullying and school-based violence on intersex learners in Australia found that 42% had thought about self-harm, and 26% had engaged in it; 60% had thought about suicide, and 19% had attempted it.<sup>117</sup>

In Indonesia, 17% of LGBT individuals who had been bullied in school reported having attempted suicide

### Homelessness

Domestic violence, family rejection, and barriers to accessing services and support when experiencing violence or being forced to leave home, are factors that contribute to high levels of homelessness among LGBTQI+ people. In the United States, 17% of sexual minority adults have experienced homelessness, which is more than twice the general population.<sup>118</sup> 8% of transgender adults have been homeless in the past year.<sup>119</sup>

LGBTQ+ youth report high rates of homelessness. In the United States, they are at 120% higher risk of experiencing homelessness compared to non-LGBTQ+ peers.<sup>120</sup> In the UK, a study found that many LGBTQ+ youth have experienced violence prior to being made homeless – 16% were forced to do sexual acts against their will by family members before becoming homeless. This number rises to 21% for LGBTQ+ youth with disabilities. Once homeless, LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to face violence and exploitation than non-LGBTQ+ peers, and 16% of LGBTQ+ young people reported engaging in sex work as a direct impact of their homelessness.<sup>121</sup>

### Economic impacts

The economic impacts of SOGIESC-based violence are felt on an individual and societal level. Research in Indonesia highlights that when LGBTQI+ people’s mental and physical health suffer as an effect of violence, this may cause absence from work or less productivity at work. The fear of violence, for instance in public spaces and on public transport, can also prevent LGBTQI+ people from taking part in economic activities.<sup>122</sup> School-based violence can also impact on future economic prospects – a survey with LGBTI people in Thailand found that those who had experienced discrimination in school reported earning less than those who reported no discrimination in school.<sup>123</sup>

Research from India<sup>124</sup>, Indonesia<sup>125</sup> and South Africa<sup>126</sup> draw linkages between LGBTQI+ individuals’ experiences of violence and exclusion, lower economic participation, and the wider impacts on countries’ economies. The studies illustrate how the combined effects of lower educational attainment due to school-based violence, underemployment due to discrimination, and health disparities due to trauma and barriers in accessing health services, lead to lower work force participation by LGBTQI+ people. This in turn leads to lower economic outputs and underinvestment in human capital, with far-reaching impacts on a country’s economic development.

# Efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people

There is no single way to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people due to the multiple, complex drivers which vary in nature and importance between contexts. Each country and LGBTQI+ movement have unique entry-points and barriers to addressing violence against LGBTQI+ people. As such, the following section does not identify interventions that are necessarily transferable to other contexts, but shares examples of different approaches to preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people and highlights emerging lessons from these efforts. The hope is that this can provide inspiration and insight into how violence against LGBTQI+ people can be tackled – with a strong caution that violence prevention efforts need to be adapted to each context and informed by the priorities and needs of local LGBTQI+ communities and organisations.

## The state of evidence

Evidence on what works to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people is still in its early stages. There are very few evaluated programmes and interventions, with most evidence coming from project documentation and grey literature. This is directly linked to the lack of funding and investment in SOGIESC-based violence prevention efforts to date – leading to limited programming, and even more limited documentation of efforts and sharing of good practice. In 2019-20, LGBTI focused funding accounted for only .0004% of governments' official development assistance (ODA), and .0035% of global foundation funding.<sup>127</sup>

66 In 2019-2020, 32% of global funding for LGBTI causes was focused on LGBTI communities in the Global South and East, while 63% of all funding focused on LGBTI communities in the Global North 99

The Global Philanthropy Project's analysis of global funding for LGBTI causes shows that 4% of all funding in 2017-18 was dedicated to addressing violence (excluding funding for the United States).<sup>128</sup> This figure increased to 5% in 2019-20, with an equal share of this funding focusing on the areas of anti-violence, and confronting homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and interphobia. Less than 1% of global LGBTI funding in 2019-20 focused on victim support.<sup>129</sup>

Analysis of funding flows reveals that LGBTQI+ organisations, especially located in the Global South and East, are often seriously underfunded. In 2019-2020, 32% of global funding for LGBTI causes was focused on LGBTI communities in the Global South and East, while 63% of all funding focused on LGBTI communities in the Global North.<sup>130</sup> The current state of evidence is a direct reflection of the global distribution of resources – to date, the majority of evaluated and documented interventions to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people have been implemented in countries in the Global North. Evidence is more limited from the Global South and East, and particularly from humanitarian contexts and conflict-affected settings.

## Programmes in humanitarian contexts:

There is limited documentation of programming to reduce violence against LGBTQI+ people in humanitarian contexts and conflict-affected settings. As a result, little is known about what works to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people in these settings. However, recent years have seen an expansion of resources<sup>131</sup> focusing on addressing violence against LGBTQI+ people in humanitarian contexts and conflict-affected settings. These resources include practice-based knowledge of approaches and entry points for humanitarian actors to better support LGBTQI+ people in these contexts. See for example IRC's (2021) *Cycles of displacement: Understanding violence, discrimination, and exclusion of LGBTQI people in humanitarian contexts*. [↗](#)

84% of global LGBTI funding (outside the United States) in 2019-20 did not focus on a specific LGBTI group.<sup>132</sup> However, this does not mean that resources are evenly distributed. Structural inequalities and power dynamics can also be present within civil society, and all LGBTQI+ communities may not benefit equally from this funding. For example, many donors who fund causes that they claim to be LBQ inclusive do not have a strategy in place to ensure that funding reach LBQ communities, who may face barriers to accessing LGBTI funding and women’s rights funding alike.<sup>133</sup> 12% of the 2019-20 LGBTI funding

(outside the United States) focused specifically on trans communities, and 3% on intersex communities.

Despite the lack of funding and programming, national and local LGBTQI+ organisations have led much of the efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people to date. There is scope for future research to tap deeper into this evidence base, which would require gathering practitioner-based knowledge, and movement, activist and community-generated lessons learned.

## Learning from what works to prevent violence against women and girls

While prevention of violence against LGBTQI+ people remains at an early stage, recent years have seen an increase in evidence of what works to prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG). Increased programming coupled with robust evaluations have enabled learning about which types of interventions to prevent VAWG are effective and why. During six years, the What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (What Works) programme evaluated 15 interventions in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs), and identified ten key design and implementation elements that are critical for more effective interventions to prevent VAWG.<sup>134</sup> While interventions should be tailored to the needs and realities of LGBTQI+ people, there may approaches and core elements from this evidence base that are transferable to interventions to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people.

Implementation	Rigorously planned, with a robust theory of change, rooted in knowledge of local context.	Address multiple drivers of VAW, such as gender inequity, poverty, poor communication and marital conflict.	Especially in highly patriarchal contexts, work with women and men, and where relevant, families.	Based on theories of gender and social empowerment that view behaviour change as a collective rather than solely individual process, and foster positive interpersonal relations and gender equality.
	Use group-based participatory learning methods, for adults and children, that emphasise empowerment, critical reflection, communication and conflict resolution skills building.	Age-appropriate design for children with a longer time for learning and an engaging pedagogy such as sport and play.	Carefully designed, user-friendly manuals and materials supporting all intervention components to accomplish their goals.	Integrate support for survivors of violence.
Design	Optimal intensity, duration and frequency of sessions and overall programme length enables time for reflection and experiential learning.		Staff and volunteers are selected for their gender equitable attitudes and non-violence behaviour, and are thoroughly trained, supervised and supported.	

Source [↗](#)

## Multi-level approaches

Violence against LGBTQI+ people takes place in various settings and is perpetrated by a range of actors, ranging from family members and intimate partners to strangers and law enforcement actors. As such, efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people must take place at various levels, involving different sectors and actors, and targeting different drivers of violence. This section presents approaches across different levels, involving government and civil society actors, with LGBTQI+ organisations often playing leading roles. In this report, the approaches are organised on the **interpersonal, community, societal, international** and **regional level**.

## Interpersonal level approaches

### Family-based approaches

Although family violence is one of the main forms of violence experienced by LGBTQI+ people, there is little evidence of family-based approaches being implemented.<sup>135</sup> The state government of Victoria in Australia has embarked on a journey to fill this evidence gap and bring violence experienced by LGBTQI communities into primary prevention<sup>136</sup> of family violence. LGBTQI communities have been included in a comprehensive policy response to tackling family violence, and a number of resources and guidance have been produced on how to address family violence affecting LGBTQI people through primary prevention.<sup>137</sup>

#### **Box 3** Awareness-raising and behaviour change targeting parents of LGB children (United States)

The Lead with Love project consists of a 35-minute documentary film which was designed for parents of LGB children. The film features real life stories highlighting parents' reactions to their child's identity, and provides support, information, and behavioural guidance for parents.<sup>138</sup> The film draws on research on the effects of discrimination on LGB children's and youth's mental and physical health; highlighting how parental rejection increases the risk of substance abuse, low self-esteem, depression and suicide among young LGB people. The film is available online for free and was promoted widely with a multi-media marketing campaign. The film reached 1,865 parents of young people (25 and under) who were known or thought to be LGB, and 2,509 LBG young people during the first 12 months of being available. A post-film assessment with parents indicated that 72% found the film either 'very' or 'extremely' helpful.<sup>139</sup>

## VAWG prevention programmes

Sexual minority women, trans women and some trans men (when they are incorrectly perceived as women) are at particular risk of some forms of violence due to intersecting gender-based and SOGIESC-based oppression. There may be opportunities to address SOGIESC-based violence in VAWG prevention programmes (such as interventions to end IPV and child, early and forced marriage) by addressing common structural root causes to violence.<sup>140</sup> However, there is limited evidence of this being done in practice and few mainstream VAWG programmes intentionally target women and girls with diverse SOGIESC.<sup>141</sup>

### Box 4 Learning from the field of VAWG prevention

While evidence of SOGIESC inclusive VAWG programmes is limited, there is a growing evidence base of how different types of approaches can prevent violence against women and girls. An evidence review of interventions to prevent primarily IPV and non-partner sexual violence found a number of approaches<sup>142</sup> to be effective. For example, these include:

- **Combined economic and social empowerment programmes:** Combining economic interventions (such as microfinance for women) with gender transformative programming has showed effectiveness in preventing women's experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV).
- **Couples' interventions:** This type of intervention, conducted among couples in the general population, has proved to be effective in reducing women's experiences of IPV. These interventions have typically focused on transforming gender relations within the couple, or addressing alcohol and violence in relationships.
- **Community activism to shift harmful gender attitudes, role and social norms:** This approach can be effective in reducing VAWG at the community level through multi-year intensive community activism.

Evidence and learning from the VAWG field have showed that it is possible to prevent violence within programmatic timeframes when these are well designed and executed. There may be evidence and lessons that are applicable and transferable for preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people. Evidence from the broader VAWG prevention field will be integrated where relevant under different interventions/approaches.<sup>143</sup>

## Preventing IPV

LGBTQI+ people experience high levels of IPV in same-sex and opposite sex relationships, including in forced marriages. However, there are few interventions that address this problem as the vast majority of IPV interventions focus on heterosexual, cisgender couples. One initiative that addresses this gap is found in Australia, where an online platform supports LGBTQI+ communities to have healthy relationships.<sup>144</sup>

### Box 5 Promoting healthy relationships in LGBTQ+ communities (Australia)

The 'Say It Out Loud' project encourages LGBTQ+ communities to have healthy relationships, seek help for unhealthy relationships and support their friends.<sup>145</sup> The project started as a local resource in New South Wales, however, it expanded to become a national resource across Australia. The website provides information about healthy relationships including tips for LGBTQI people to become 'LGBTIQ role models', information targeted at those who are experiencing violence as well as for those who may be perpetrating violence, and information about violence in LGBTQI people's relationships. The website provides specific information to LBQ women, GBQ men, transgender, gender diverse and intersex people, LGBTQI people living with a disability, and LGBTQI people of different ages, ethnicity and Indigenous status, and other diverse identities and characteristics.<sup>146</sup>

# Community-level approaches

## School-based approaches

School-based approaches to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ students are one of the common approaches to tackle SOGIESC-based violence, with more evidence available than in most other areas. While a range of efforts to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ children and youth in schools have been rolled across the world, few of these have been evaluated for impact. Nevertheless, there are some promising examples and evidence of positive impact.

These approaches can be implemented in tandem, forming so-called ‘whole-school’ approaches. An assessment by the UK’s Government Equalities Office found that whole-school approaches were the most effective approaches to addressing SOGIESC-based bullying as they tackle the multiple drivers of violence in the school.<sup>147</sup>

  
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field**

Schools are recognised as an important platform for addressing violence in the lives of children and youth, and for its potential to generate longer term impacts by reducing the risk of adult violence perpetration. Evidence from the VAWG prevention field suggest

that school-based interventions can prevent multiple forms of violence including peer violence, dating violence, and corporal punishment by addressing harmful norms on gender, violence and relationships. There is good evidence that well-designed and implemented interventions that are based on theories of gender and power, use participatory

learning approaches, build skills in critical reflection, and are delivered by well-trained facilitators and teachers, can prevent violence.<sup>148</sup>

### School policies

One popular approach to addressing SOGIESC-based violence in schools is through policies. Several countries in the EU encourage or mandate their educational institutions to have policies against SOGIESC-based violence in place. Research in the UK suggest that LGBT students in schools with policies against homophobic bullying are less likely to say that they have experienced bullying than students in schools without such policy (42% vs. 51%) and are also less likely to worry about being bullied (38% compared to 52% in schools without a policy).<sup>149</sup>

### Inclusive curricula

Inclusive curricula and learning materials that address SOGIESC-based violence is another prevention strategy employed by schools. LGBTQI+ rights can either be implicitly addressed, for instance by including images of positive LGBTQI+ role models and positive messages, and/or explicitly through addressing SOGIESC issues, for example in Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).<sup>150</sup> There is limited evidence of the impact of inclusive curricula. However, an evaluation in the Netherlands found that integrating sexual and gender diversity in core educational objectives had increased students’ feeling of safety.<sup>151</sup>

## Teacher training

Adequate training is essential for teachers to deliver SOGIESC content in curricula, as well as to support safer school environments for LGBTQI+ students. This can be delivered through in-service training for teachers, managers, principals, counsellors etc. and pre-service training for teaching students. Such approaches have been documented in various countries including in the EU and in the Asia Pacific.<sup>152</sup> However, there is limited evidence to whether teacher training has translated into safer school environments for LGBTQI+ children and youth. Nevertheless, there is some emerging good practice in this area of work.

### **Box 6** Staff networks to tackle SOGIESC-based violence in schools (France and Nepal)

In France, an expert staff network on SOGIESC-based violence has been established to support teachers to address SOGIESC-based violence. The network consists of experts based in the regional branches of the ministry of education, who are often also specialised in broader GBV and gender issues. The experts cascade their knowledge to colleagues in the region through trainings and resources.<sup>153</sup>

A similar approach can be found in Nepal, where the NGO the Blue Diamond Society (BDS) has been delivering training to teachers and school administrators to increase knowledge on SOGIE issues, supporting schools in the implementation of Nepal's SOGIE curriculum. Following the training, teachers were supported to create a 'pool' of teachers to train other teachers and school administrators with a focus on how to make schools safer for LGBTQI students.<sup>154</sup>

## Teacher resources

Guidance for teachers and other school staff on how to address SOGIESC issues can help contribute to a safer environment for LGBTQI+ students. In the United States, an evaluation found that educational resources on LGBT issues for educators in middle schools and high schools had a positive impact on their self-reported capacity to contribute to a safer school environment.

### **Box 7** Resources supporting teachers to support safer school environments (United States)

The 'Safe Space Kit' is a package of resources, including a guide to 'Being an Ally to LGBT Students', and Safe Space posters and stickers. A survey with educators who had received the kit found that most educators had used the kit and found that it enhanced their knowledge and capacity to support LGBT students. Furthermore, 80% said that they intervened when they observed anti-LGBT behaviours, such as biased remarks or bullying.<sup>155</sup>



## Student organisations

Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs), or Gender and Sexuality Alliances, are student-led organisations seen primarily in schools from middle school and up to university. The GSA approach emerged in the United States and Canada but has now spread to other parts of the world. Several studies in the United States have observed positive effects of GSAs on perceived and real school safety for LGBTQ students.<sup>156</sup>

### Box 8 Gay Straight Alliances for safer school environments (United States)

The GSAs focus on providing LGBTQI students with a safe and affirming space within the school environment, which many LGBTQI students may experience as hostile. The organisations are open for LGBTQI students and ally peers. Research shows that the presence of GSAs at school is associated with fewer indicators of a negative school environment, such as fewer anti-LGBTQ remarks from peers, and reduced levels of violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ students. In schools without a GSA, 40% of LGBTQ students reported high levels of victimisation related to their sexual orientation, compared to 25% of students in schools with a GSA.

## Youth programmes

Several programmes working with youth have addressed violence against LGBTQI+ people by addressing homophobic and transphobic attitudes, particularly among young men through programmes that focus on promoting healthy masculinities. However, most programmes working with adolescent boys have not been evaluated for impact on participants' attitudes towards SOGIESC issues.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, there is some evidence to suggest that these approaches can be effective in shifting harmful attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people.

### Promoting healthy relationships

The 'Promoting Healthy Relationships among LGBT Youth' project in the United States sought to reduce the risk of IPV in young LGBT people's (aged 14-24) relationships. Among other activities, a safe dating curriculum was adapted to better address the realities and needs of LGBT youth.<sup>158</sup> This was subsequently developed into a Safe Dates online toolkit and two additional adaptations of the curriculum.<sup>159</sup>

### Transforming social norms and attitudes

Programmes working with adolescents to promote gender equality and challenge harmful masculinities have sometimes included a focus on addressing homophobia and transphobia. In Malawi, Plan International's Champions of Change is one example. An evaluation found that while girls' positive attitudes towards supporting equal rights for homosexual people increased from 16% to 27% at the end of the programme, boys' supportive attitudes decreased from 19% to 14%.<sup>160</sup>

### Box 9 School-based programming exploring masculinity, gender, and power with boys (Canada)

WiseGuyz<sup>161</sup> is a school-based programme for junior high boys (14 - 15 years), delivered through an integrated curriculum made up of four core modules that are facilitated over 14 sessions. The programme aims to help boys understand the connection between masculinity and male norms, sexuality and violence, to ultimately support them to achieve sexual well-being and healthy relationships. As part of exploring norms around masculinity, the programme addresses homophobic attitudes. Research conducted three years into the programme found that there was a significant decrease in boys being homophobic, and evaluations have found positive impact on boys' attitudes and beliefs with respect to sexual health, masculinity, and homosexuality.<sup>162</sup>

Evaluations of Equipundo's<sup>163</sup> gender-transformative approach designed to engage young men in changing social norms, Programme H ('H' for *homen* or man in Portuguese and *hombre* in Spanish), found that homophobic attitudes decreased in all programme countries in the Balkans<sup>164</sup>, while in Brazil<sup>165</sup> homophobic attitudes remained steadfast after the intervention. Building on findings from the evaluations, a specific programme has been developed, Programme D ('D' for diversity), which focuses on sexual diversity and is designed to provide further guidance on discussing sexual diversity with young men.<sup>166</sup>

Evidence from the VAWG prevention sector suggests that interventions using community activism to drive social norms change can be effective when they 1) allocate sufficient time for adapting the intervention to the local context, 2) have longer implementation time (18-24 month or longer) and intensity, and 3) carefully select and train volunteers/ activists, who also receive ongoing support as they work in communities over a longer period of time.<sup>167</sup> These lessons may be of value for interventions to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people, if carefully adapted to the context and building on entry-points to changing social norms identified by local LGBTQI+ organisations.

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### Faith-based approaches

Faith-based communities and leaders are sometimes among the perpetrators of violence against LGBTQI+ people. However, they can also be a positive force in preventing violence against LGBTQI+ communities.

#### Box 10 Global Interfaith Network (South Africa/ globally)

The Global Interfaith Network for People of All Sexes, Sexual Orientations, Gender Identities and Expressions (GIN-SSOGIE) is a network of individuals and organisations who use their beliefs, spirituality, and traditions to advocate for the rights of people of all SOGIESC.<sup>168</sup> The network works across 8 regions to provide safe space to convene, document best practices, develop resources and create local, regional, and international strategies for ending discrimination and increasing acceptance of people with diverse SOGIESC. For example, from 2017 to 2020, GIN-SSOGIE brought together more than 100 people from almost 50 different countries in 7 seminars, convening safe spaces for activists, scholars, and human rights advocates to develop regional and culturally appropriate counter-narratives on the topic of 'Family and Traditional Values'.<sup>169</sup>

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Engaging faith leaders and other opinion leaders is also part of many VAWG prevention approaches. Interventions have engaged with faith leaders in various ways, enabling them to use their positions of influence in communities to promote attitude change around gender inequality, gender roles, stigma, and violence against women and girls. UN Women has synthesised lessons learned from such VAWG prevention interventions, which highlight the need to identify appropriate entry-points and framings for engaging leaders in a given context.<sup>170</sup>

### Economic empowerment approaches

The economic impacts of violence against LGBTQI+ people are clear. Discrimination, violence, and the threat of violence can lead to work absence and lower participation in economic activities. Economic exclusion can in turn increase the risk of violence, as LGBTQI+ people may face livelihood challenges, homelessness, and being financially dependent on violent families or partners. Some actors have employed economic empowerment approaches to address this, although it remains an underexplored area in the context of violence against LGBTQI+ people.

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Combined social and economic empowerment approaches have been identified as an effective approach to prevent women's experiences of IPV.<sup>171</sup> These interventions provide economic activities for women, such as microfinance, alongside grouped-based social empowerment sessions with a focus transforming gender relations. These have primarily targeted women but sometimes include male partners. The rationale is that this combined approach tackles two critical drivers of IPV: poverty and gender inequality.

### Box 11 Economic empowerment and social inclusion (Cambodia and regionally)

Micro Rainbow International Foundation (MRI) works to tackle poverty and financial exclusion of LGBTQI people. Since 2013, MRI works in Cambodia to reduce poverty among LGBTQI people and increase social acceptance by supporting LGBTQI people to develop and run their own businesses. MRI provides skills training, coaching and start-up capital to members of the LGBTQI community, who often face challenges in finding employment and secure livelihoods due to discrimination and social exclusion. Over the years of running the programme, MRI has noted significant changes in how members of the LGBTQI community who set up businesses and income-generating activities are perceived by their families and wider society, including increased respect, reduced violence and discrimination, and greater acceptance of partners.<sup>172</sup>

MRI is also implementing a regional programme in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines and Thailand, which works with the private sector to address SOGIESC-based discrimination and exclusion in workplaces.<sup>173</sup>

### Online approaches

Online spaces offer both opportunities and risks for LGBTQI+ people. Prevention of online and technology facilitated violence against LGBTQI+ people is still in its early stages, with few documented solutions to how online hate and abuse can be effectively tackled. However, some actors have begun to compile good practice and develop guidance for making online spaces safer for LGBTQI+ people. In the UK, Stonewall and Childnet International have produced a resource for schools and colleges.<sup>174</sup> It sets out practical steps for how educational actors can support respectful, inclusive and safer online environments. This includes developing online safety policies and curriculum which communicate that SOGIESC-based bullying is unacceptable.

In the United States, GLAAD has conducted the first-ever baseline evaluation of the LGBTQ user safety experience across the social media landscape. The exercise concluded that practically all online spaces are currently unsafe for LGBTQ people, and set out recommendations for the biggest social media platforms on how to improve safety for LGBTQ users. This includes using more human moderators instead of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is often biased and not able to detect anti-LGBTQ content and hate speech to the same degree as real persons. The resource sets out minimum standards for online platforms, such as ensuring protection of LGBTQ users in community guidelines.<sup>175</sup>

Online technology can also be harnessed by actors in the work to prevent and respond to violence against LGBTQI+ people.

### Box 12 Soteria – a digital solution to increase reporting of hate crimes (UK and globally)

Stonewall, working in close collaboration with Vodafone Foundation developed an app for the LGBTQI+ community to securely report hate crimes, find referrals to the services and support they need, and to build an evidence base to inform civil society and governments on how to tackle the growing problem of hate crime. The app will provide much needed support in contexts where LGBTQI+ communities do not report hate crimes because they do not trust authorities or risk being further victimised. The app is being tested in two countries this year working closely with local partners, with several more countries in the pipeline to broaden the reach globally over the next decade. Vodafone Foundation's leadership shows how investing in technology and sharing their know-how makes the difference in meeting the challenges LGBTQI+ people face in communities around the world.

The app is also an important addition to the public facing and secure hate crime reporting database built by civil society and funded by the UK government that is now operating in a dozen countries. It is vital to use technology to provide evidence of the hate and harm faced by LGBTQI+ communities where the administration of justice continues to fail them.<sup>176</sup>

## Societal level approaches

### Advocacy for legal reforms

Decriminalising same-sex relationships and behaviour, and reforming other laws that oppress and justify violence against people with diverse SOGIESC is a critical step in ending violence against LGBTQI+ people. Although few studies examine the impact of decriminalisation on rates of violence and perceived safety, some studies examine the association between decriminalisation and impact on social attitudes<sup>177</sup>, which may have an impact on violence against LGBTQI+ people.

These studies have found varied results, with some suggesting that decriminalisation improves supportive attitudes towards homosexuality and LGBTQI rights<sup>178</sup>, while others suggest that decriminalisation mainly improves attitudes toward homosexuality among those who already held supportive attitudes, but may not have much impact on those who hold negative attitudes.<sup>179</sup> The varying findings highlight that the relationship between legal changes and attitudinal changes is not linear or one-directional. Legal reforms must therefore be coupled with other approaches such as social norms change.

### Policies to prevent violence

Most countries lack comprehensive policies to address human rights violations against LGBTQI+ people, and

where these are in place, most governments do not evaluate their effectiveness. Policy measures to address violence and discrimination against trans and intersex people are particularly scarce.<sup>180</sup>

However, in some contexts, LGBTQI+ people have been recognised as an at-risk group in violence prevention policies, including policy efforts to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) and family violence prevention policies. Such inclusion signals an important recognition of the risks of violence for LGBTQI+ people, however, it is yet not clear to what extent this has translated into tangible action and impact, as very limited research has gone into assessing such policies.<sup>181</sup>

Examples of countries where governments have made clear commitments to preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people as part of broader violence prevention strategies are Australia (see section on family violence) and South Africa. The government of South Africa has long recognised LGBTQI+ people in policy and legislation, and was the first country to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The current National Strategic Plan on Gender-based Violence and Femicide recognises LGBTQIA+ people as a priority group.<sup>182</sup> However, major gaps remain between policy and implementation, and rates of violence against LGBTQI+ remain high.

### Box 13 Working with local policy-makers and service providers to address violence (the Philippines and Sri Lanka)

As the name indicates, 'Enhancing Domestic Violence and Family Violence Protections for LGBT People in the Philippines and Sri Lanka' addressed family violence and domestic violence through supporting protective policies and enhancing capacity of service providers to support LGBT people at risk of, or who have experienced, violence. The project operated at the local governmental level, and focused on prevention and response, the latter through training service providers to be LGBT inclusive and through developing LGBT inclusive family and domestic violence response protocols. In the Philippines, the project supported 187 service providers in Quezon City to build capacity to be recognised as 'LGBTI friendly', and community forums were convened to sensitise key stakeholders and the public about the project and LGBTI people's right to protection from domestic violence.<sup>183</sup>

### Health sector approaches

Health sector initiatives can address violence against LGBTQI+ people directly as well as indirectly, including through legislation banning abusive medical practices and through broader work to promote LGBTQI+ inclusive services.

### Legislation against harmful practices

In 2016, the UN noted that globally, there have been few positive developments in preventing medical violence and abuse such as non-consensual surgeries on intersex children, forced medical procedures to obtain legal gender

recognition, and forced anal and genital examinations. At the same time, some progress and promising practice was identified. For example in Malta, the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act adopted in 2015 protects the rights of intersex minors to bodily integrity and autonomy by banning surgery and treatment to which they cannot provide informed consent. Similar moves have been noted in other countries. However, it is not clear how such legislation, regulations, and recommendations have been implemented in practice.<sup>184</sup>

### Training health sector staff

Another approach is to train healthcare professionals in LGBTQI+ inclusive service provision. These efforts may not have violence prevention as an explicit objective, but typically address broader barriers to LGBTQI+ people's access to health services such as prejudice, negative attitudes, and discrimination from healthcare staff. These interventions may contribute to preventing violence and abuse in healthcare settings such as verbal violence, 'outing' by healthcare staff, and neglect.

#### **Box 14** Training healthcare staff in LGBTQI+ inclusive service provision for all (EU)

The 'Health4LGBTI' project was piloted in the EU between 2016-2018. After initial research to understand existing barriers and challenges faced by LGBTI people in the health sector, a training package was developed aiming to increase the knowledge, attitudes and skills of healthcare professionals when providing healthcare to LGBTI people. The training package was piloted and evaluated in six countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and the UK). In each site, the training was adapted to the local needs. A pre- and post-training survey found that the training resulted in improved knowledge among participants and increased willingness to adopt an LGBTI inclusive approach. In a follow-up survey, participants reported that they were using their new knowledge, and some reported having intervened when they had witnessed discrimination against LGBTI people in the healthcare setting where they work.<sup>185</sup>

### Training law enforcement actors

The police and other law enforcement actors are known to be potential perpetrators of violence against LGBTQI+ people. In response to this, there have been efforts to build capacity within the police to prevent violence and abuse against LGBTQI+ people. This has focused both on preventing violence perpetrated by law enforcement officers, as well as increasing law enforcement actors' capacity to protect LGBTQI+ people from violence.

These projects have typically focused on challenging negative stereotypes and officers' personal beliefs about LGBTQI+ people, and raising awareness on issues affecting LGBTQI+ people and the police's role in protecting people with diverse SOGIESC. While participants have reported positive feedback on trainings, and some positive signs of institutionalising aspects of the trainings have been observed, there has been limited follow up on the longer-term impacts.<sup>186</sup>

#### **Box 15** Addressing stigmatising and discriminatory attitudes in the police force (South Africa)

Between 2016 to 2018, the South African Police Service (SAPS) implemented the 'Dignity, Diversity and Policing' (DDP) project, which aimed to address stigmatising and discriminatory attitudes by law enforcement towards people with experience of selling sex, people who use drugs, and LGBTI people. The project developed a 'sensitisation manual' and trained SAPS officers in using the manual, including training 25 SAPS police officers as trainers. The manual was piloted with 173 officers and 60 police officers. Pre- and post-evaluation of the training showed that participants believed the training had improved their knowledge of sex work legislation, and they reported fewer stigmatising views toward people engaged in sex work, LGBTI people and people who use drugs.<sup>187</sup>

## Working with media

Media can play an important role in influencing public opinion and perception of LGBTQI+ people. How LGBTQI+ people and SOGIESC issues are portrayed in media can either fuel negative attitudes and prejudice based on misinformation, misconceptions and stereotypes, or it can be a positive force by providing accurate information and counter negative stereotypes and beliefs.

Efforts to engage the media as a positive force have been seen in various settings, for example by providing training to media outlets and journalists on how to report about LGBTQI+ people and SOGIESC issues in a rights-based, sensitive and dignified way, as well as launching media campaigns and programmes focusing on positive portrayals and shifting the narrative around LGBTQI+ rights.

### Box 16 Training journalist on rights-based reporting on LGBT issues (Vietnam)

The Vietnamese LGBT movement has described working with the media as a key strategy to changing public perceptions about LGBT people. Negative stereotypes of LGBT people have dominated in the media and entertainment industry, where LGBT people are often made fun of using discriminatory and derogatory terms. LGBT organisations have sensitised journalists on LGBT issues and the impact of their reporting. Following a training of 35 journalists from over 20 media channels, focusing on trans people's rights, news coverage of LGBT people was reportedly seen to be more objective and positive.<sup>188</sup>

## Awareness raising campaigns

Public campaigns to disseminate information and shed light on different issues faced by LGBTQI+ people is a common approach seen on a global, national and local level. Many such campaigns have taken place across the world, and some have noted positive results such as raising the issue of violence against LGBTQI+ people on the political agenda and facilitating dialogue among key stakeholders.<sup>189</sup> However, few studies have assessed the impact of campaigns and public awareness raising initiatives on reducing violence, for instance by measuring changes in people's attitudes and reported behaviours.



Evidence from violence against women and girls (VAWG) programming has shown that awareness raising interventions are ineffective in preventing violence on their own, as they have limited impact on attitudes, decision-making and behaviours. It is recommended that awareness-raising interventions should not be implemented as stand-alone activities but as part of multi-component interventions.<sup>190</sup>

## International and regional levels

Important work is going on at the global and regional levels that connects actors who work on preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people.

### Regional partnerships and collaboration

Two innovative examples of regional collaboration on issues related to violence against LGBTQI+ people are found in Asia.

#### Regional network on GBV and SOGIE

The Asia Regional Network on SOGIE and GBV was created in 2020 as the first of its kind in the region. The network links national and local LGBTI advocates through a regional platform on GBV and SOGIE, aiming to create a space for exchange of technical knowledge as well as political discussions, strategising and movement building. The network aims to enhance evidence on effective approaches to address violence against LGBTI people through sharing good practices, intervention tools, and lessons learned from work across the region. It does so by hosting online discussions and webinars, convene regional exchanges, and act as a knowledge hub.<sup>191</sup>

#### The ASEAN SOGIE Caucus

The ASEAN SOGIE Caucus is a network of human rights activists from Southeast Asia working for the inclusion of SOGIESC in the mandates of human rights duty bearers in the region. Members have been actively involved in regional advocacy to ensure that issues related to SOGIESC are integrated into the ASEAN Commission on the Rights of Women and Children, and have monitored governments' reporting on progress towards meeting their commitments under the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children (DEDAW) and The Convention on the Elimination on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>192</sup>

### Global funding to address violence against LGBTQI+ people

Global funding for LGBTQI+ causes remains inadequate, with limited funding reaching LGBTQI+ people in the Global South and East, and with a small share of the funding being dedicated to addressing violence (5% in 2019-20).<sup>193</sup> This can help explain the evidence gaps on violence against LGBTQI+ people as well as the lack of evidence of what effective approaches to tackle violence may look like, as there is both a lack of programming in this field as well as limited funding for research, evaluation and documenting lessons learned. A 2020 analysis of funding to LBQ groups found that less than half (43%) of donors funded research and knowledge production, which subsequently limits the evidence of impact of funding to other areas such as programming and movement building.<sup>194</sup>

Nevertheless, actors are increasingly taking steps to respond to the gaps in funding to LGBTQI+ organisations and work to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people.

#### UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UNTF)

UNTF has been recognised as an innovative funder for addressing violence against women in inclusive ways, including funding a number of programmes addressing violence against women, which have been inclusive of, or focused on, lesbian, bisexual and queer women and trans people. Between 2016-2020, UNTF reported that their supported grantees reached over 16,421 lesbian, bisexual, and trans women.<sup>195</sup> This has included support to a coalition of women's rights organisations representing marginalised communities in Chile, which included a lesbian-led organisation; research on challenges faced by LBT women survivors of violence in Albania; and a project addressing violence against Roma LGBTI women.<sup>196</sup>

#### Women's Voice and Leadership programme in the Caribbean

Implemented by the Equality Fund and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, this five-year programme (2019-2024) provides funding to women's rights organisations and LGBTIQ groups across the Caribbean.<sup>197</sup> It aims to reduce funding gaps for these organisations, where especially LGBTIQ organisations and groups lack consistent funding and largely rely on volunteer work. The funding aims to respond to organisations' own priorities and agendas, and the programme recognises the need to address urgent issues such as discrimination and violence faced by LGBTIQ persons, alongside support to long-term sustainability of organisation and movement building. The programme is guided by an Advisory Group which includes regional leaders with expertise spanning across women's rights and LGBTQI+ rights.<sup>198</sup>

# Recommendations for preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people

Evidence from across the world reveals how LGBTQI+ people face violence in every sphere of their lives. By bringing together data and documentation from different regions and countries, a clear picture emerges – LGBTQI+ people are at risk of multiple forms of violence, by various perpetrators, and repeatedly in their lives, often starting early. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the risk of violence intensifying as LGBTQI+ people have been trapped with abusers at home, been isolated from critical social support structures, and have been subjected to increased state-violence and crackdowns.

This violence is having severe, long-lasting and far-reaching consequences for survivors and communities. Violence against LGBTQI+ people is linked to mental health issues

and substance abuse, minority stress, HIV risk, livelihood challenges and homelessness. Prevention of violence against LGBTQI+ people must be urgently accelerated to break the cycles of stigma, discrimination and violence in LGBTQI+ people's lives.

Global, national and local LGBTQI+ organisations have relentlessly led efforts to prevent SOGIESC-based violence. However, the lack of funding and dedicated support to this work has held back wider progress. Based on the evidence review and consultations with LGBTQI+ organisations and practitioners working on LGBTQI+ rights, this section sets out recommendations for policy-makers and donors, practitioners, and researchers – calling on them to support the struggle for ending violence against LGBTQI+ people.

## Cross-cutting principles

- **Meaningful participation:** LGBTQI+ organisations should be meaningfully engaged in all stages of work to address violence against LGBTQI+ people, including at the proposal, design, implementation, and evaluation stages. LGBTQI+ organisations are best placed to develop strategies to address violence against LGBTQI+ people in the context, design research, as well as advise on locally appropriate use of framework and terminology related to diverse SOGIESC.
- **Context:** Understand the legal, social and political environment for LGBTQI+ people in the national and local context, including which laws may exist that criminalise and/or restrict diverse SOGIESC relationships, practices, and expressions, and how these laws are enforced. Also seek to understand the context for local LGBTQI+ organisations, including barriers to registration and accessing funding.
- **Intersectionality:** Adopt an intersectional approach that recognises the diversity between and within LGBTQI+ communities. Understand how SOGIESC-based oppression intersects with other forms of oppression, such as related to gender inequality, disability, age, race, nationality, migration status, and HIV-status.
- **Do no harm:** Projects and research to address violence against LGBTQI+ people should only be undertaken after a thorough risk assessment has been carried out. Again, this should be guided by local LGBTQI+ organisation representing the affected communities. Any efforts to address violence against LGBTQI+ people should be guided by a do-no-harm approach; should consider the risk of backlash against LGBTQI+ people; and ensure that robust safety and referral protocols are in place. Ongoing risk assessment should be carried out, as risks can change.



### 1 Increase funding in evidence-informed and evidence-generating prevention programming and evaluation

Prevention of violence against LGBTQI+ people is an emerging field and there is an urgent need to invest in programming as well as monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) of prevention interventions. Key recommendations for this work include:

- **Prioritise funding to LGBTQI+ organisations to undertake work to prevent SOGIESC-based violence.** This can be through direct funding, or through intermediaries such as global, regional or national grant-making funds and trusts that specifically focus on funding smaller, grassroots LGBTQI+ organisations and projects.
- **Ensure that donors and policy-makers across different thematic portfolios and sectors take action and invest in interventions to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people.** This includes for instance the areas of education, health, and humanitarian action, which provide crucial entry-points for preventing violence and reaching survivors. Sectoral/thematic donors and policy-makers should prioritise funding to LGBTQI+ organisations who work in these areas, to ensure that their funding is aligned with LGBTQI+ organisations' strategies and benefit LGBTQI+ communities.
- **Address structural barriers to accessing funding for smaller, grassroots LGBTQI+ organisations,** such as requirements on being registered or having certain financial and reporting systems in place to receive funding. Where donor requirements are difficult to address, find alternative ways of funding LGBTQI+ organisations (e.g. through joint projects with partner organisations or through LGBTQI+ focused intermediaries).
- **Support the development of and strengthening of infrastructure needed to channel more resources directly to grassroots LGBTQI+ organisations.** This could for instance be done through supporting regional, LGBTQI+ led and focused, intermediaries.
- **Invest in programming that target drivers of violence at multiple levels** – including the individual, to the interpersonal, community, and societal level.
- **Recognise and target the multiple forms of violence that LGBTQI+ people experience.** This includes family violence, so-called conversion therapy, IPV, forced marriages, school-based violence, and violence that takes place in healthcare settings, religious institutions, in public and in online spaces.
- **Invest in work that addresses violence against LGBTQI+ people in their diversity and across the life course.** To date, there has been particularly limited funding focused on organisations led by LBQ women, trans people and intersex people. To address violence across the life course, work for instance with schools to address bullying and violence against children, with adolescents on promoting healthy relationships, and work with families and couples on preventing IPV and family violence.
- **Invest in LGBTQI+ organisations intersectional work to reach those who experience intersecting forms of discrimination and violence,** including LGBTQI+ people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people who are refugees and internally displaced, and LGBTQI+ people from ethnic minorities.
- **Prioritise knowledge generation alongside funding for violence prevention programming,** including through funding evaluation of interventions and research to expand the evidence base of 'what works' to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people. Donors could for instance consider supporting LGBTQI+ organisations to develop a shared research agenda for preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people, which would help elevate the range of work and activism going on that contribute to preventing violence, such as movement building and regional collaboration.
- **Invest in understanding implementation and impact of legal and policy changes** on the lived realities of violence among LGBTQI+ people, in order to better understand this as well as holding governments accountable.

## 2 Integrate support for survivors within violence prevention programming

- **Assume that violence against LGBTQI+ people is taking place in any context where a violence prevention programme is being planned**, and ensure that services for survivors are integrated in prevention efforts.
- **Ensure dedicated resources for prevention programmes to assess and establish linkages to response services for LGBTQI+ survivors of violence, where these exist.** Where response services do not exist or are not safe for LGBTQI+ people to use, address the gaps by supporting capacity building for service providers on LGBTQI+ inclusive and safe service provision, or by supporting LGBTQI+ organisations to provide services in contexts where it is not deemed feasible to work directly with service providers on SOGIESC inclusion.

## 3 Support sustainability of LGBTQI+ organisations and movements

LGBTQI+ organisations are at the frontlines of preventing SOGIESC-based violence. Policy-makers and funders should ensure that specific programmes, and broader strategies and policies which these are situated within, are shaped by, and support LGBTQI+ organisations' agendas and priorities, and contribute to building their long-term sustainability.

- **Invest in long-term and flexible funding for LGBTQI+ organisations and their work to prevent violence**, supporting LGBTQI+ organisations' own priorities and long-term strategies. This should recognise that the circumstances in which many LGBTQI+ organisations operate may require a higher degree of flexibility than donors are used to, as some organisations are for instance not registered, operate underground, and are at risk of crackdowns.
- **Support capacity strengthening of LGBTQI+ organisations**, including systems and processes to support effective implementation of violence prevention initiatives, as well as help LGBTQI+ organisations to access further funding opportunities with for instance specific organisational and reporting requirements.
- **Support contingency planning and resilience of organisations** to sustain their work to prevent violence in rapidly changing circumstances, such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic and in politically sensitive and legally challenging contexts.
- **Support the establishment of Communities of Practice focused on preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people.** These can gather LGBTQI+ organisations as well as actors with a shared interests in preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people, and provide platforms for sharing experiences, knowledge, resources and new and emerging good practices.
- **Support spaces for LGBTQI+ organisations to network and build movements to prevent violence.** Convening can be done either within country or outside when civil society space is shrinking. Agendas should be led by LGBTQI+ organisations and allow space for networking, relief for activists under pressure, as well as opportunities to meaningfully engage with donors and policy-makers to shape policy and programming.
- **Support LGBTQI+ activists' safety, well-being and mental health.** LGBTQI+ activists, volunteers and staff who are working on addressing violence are often part of the communities they serve. They might have first-hand experience of violence, and are also at risk of vicarious trauma. It is important to recognise this overlap between the personal and professional, and support making services available to LGBTQI+ activists, volunteers, and staff of organisations working on addressing violence.

## Practitioners

### 4 Build on emerging and innovative practice, and carefully adapt to different contexts

Interventions and approaches which shows some promising results include school-based programming and youth programming. However, interventions in one context always need to be carefully adapted to new contexts. Priorities for this work include:

- **Collaborate closely with community-led, local LGBTQI+ organisations to adapt approaches and interventions**, and always adopt a do-no-harm approach to adaptations (alongside other cross-cutting principles).
- **Document adaptations and contextual considerations** to understand what may and may not work when adapting an approach or intervention to a new context, and provide valuable information for future adaptations.

## 5 Innovate in areas where evidence is limited

While some areas of programming and approaches to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people are emerging as promising, many programmatic areas still have limited evidence, and require further innovation and investment. Examples of areas for possible innovation includes approaches to address online violence, IPV, and family violence, as well as combined economic and social empowerment approaches.

- **Interventions should be tailored to the needs and realities of LGBTQI+ people**, however, there may be technical approaches and core elements of effective design and implementation from the field of prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) that are transferable to working to address violence against LGBTQI+ people.

## Researchers

## 6 Support national and local LGBTQI+ organisations' research priorities and agendas, while contributing to building the global evidence base and filling evidence gaps

While evidence on violence against LGBTQI+ people has expanded in recent years, critical evidence gaps remain, including on the experiences of LGBTQI+ people in humanitarian settings and on the move, and research on 'what works' is still in its early stages. When moving forward to fill these evidence gaps, priorities for researchers include:

- **Conduct research in partnership with local LGBTQI+ organisations and researchers**, and design studies and set up research teams in ways that enable learning exchange, promote the leadership of LGBTQI+ researchers from the local context, and support LGBTQI+ organisations' research capacities and agendas.
- **Share findings from research on violence against LGBTQI+ people, and evaluations and learning related to efforts to prevent SOGIESC-based violence.** These can be shared locally, nationally, regionally and internationally, and be made accessible to wider audiences through presentations, webinars, translations and easy-read formats.
- **Expand evidence that seeks to understand violence against LGBTQI+ people who experience intersecting forms of oppression and violence**, and understand effectiveness of programming on LGBTQI+ people who face intersecting inequalities and are at high risk of violence.

## 7 Follow ethical research approaches and data collection

- **Follow ethical recommendations for research on violence<sup>199</sup>, and recognise specific ethical considerations when doing research on violence against LGBTQI+ people.<sup>200</sup>** Work closely with LGBTQI+ led organisations and researchers to understand ethical considerations and risks, and how to best navigate these in the context, ensuring a do-no-harm approach.
- **Ensure that confidentiality, protection and privacy of research participants is at the centre of any research**, and that ethical and safety protocols are in place and followed at all times. While these principles should be upheld in any research and data collection, breaches of confidentiality and data management plans can have detrimental effects on LGBTQI+ individuals if their SOGIESC is exposed and data falls into the hands of the wrong people.

# Endnotes

- 1 The glossary draws on definitions of key terms in UNHCR (2021) Need to Know Guidance: Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer Persons in Forced Displacement and IRC (2021) Cycles of Displacement: Understanding Exclusion, Discrimination and Violence Against LGBTQI People in Humanitarian Contexts. The glossary does not include a comprehensive overview of all SOGIESC and LGBTQI+ terms, but focuses on those that appear in the report. For further guidance, also see 42 Degrees Glossary and Lexicon.
- 2 A form of psychotherapy designed to cause a patient to reduce or avoid an undesirable behaviour pattern by conditioning the person to associate the behaviour with an undesirable stimulus.
- 3 When presenting evidence from research and previous reports, this report uses the same terminology as in the original source, aiming to accurately reflect the groups on which the research focused. This means a variety of terminology will appear in this report. However, when synthesising evidence and discussing overarching findings, this report will use LGBTQI+ and SOGIESC terminology.
- 4 Meyer, I. H., Wilson, B. D. M., and O'Neill, K. (2021) LGBTQ People in the US: Select Findings from the Generations and TransPop Studies, UCLA Williams Institute, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Generations-TransPop-Toplines-Jun-2021.pdf>
- 5 Müller, A., Daskilewicz, K., Kabwe, M. L., Mmolai-Chalmers, A., Morroni, C., Muparamoto, N., Muula, A. S., Odira, V. Zimba, M. and the Southern and Eastern African Research Collective for Health (SEARCH) (2021) Experience of and factors associated with violence against sexual and gender minorities in nine African countries: a cross-sectional study, *BMC Public Health* (2021) 21:357, <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-10314-w> and Jaffray, B. (2020) Experiences of violent victimization and unwanted sexual behaviours among gay, lesbian, bisexual and other sexual minority people, and the transgender population, in Canada, 2018, Statistics Canada, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00009-eng.pdf?st=6KQASUDx>
- 6 The survey, based on a self-selected sample, included 2,296 LGBTI people. Data for transgender people is not disaggregated for trans women and trans men. World Bank Group (2018) Life on the Margins: Survey Results of the Experiences of LGBTI People in Southeastern Europe, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30607>
- 7 Meyer, I. H., Wilson, B. D. M., and O'Neill, K. (2021) LGBTQ People in the US: Select Findings from the Generations and TransPop Studies, UCLA Williams Institute, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Generations-TransPop-Toplines-Jun-2021.pdf>
- 8 The survey included 645 LBT women from all divisions in the country. DIVA (2019) Unjust, Unequal, Unstoppable: Fiji Lesbians, Bisexual Women, Transmen and Gender Non-Conforming People Tipping the Scales Toward Justice, <https://www.42d.org/2020/07/06/unjust-unequal-unstoppable-fiji-lesbians-bisexual-women-trans-men-and-gender-non-conforming-people-tipping-the-scales-toward-justice/>
- 9 The survey included 120 trans and gender diverse people from 11 countries. Theron, L. (2021) Over-policed, Under-protected: Experiences of Trans and Gender Diverse Communities in the Caribbean, OutRight International, <https://outrightinternational.org/sites/default/files/UTRANSOutRightDraft.pdf>
- 10 UNESCO (2015) From Insult to Inclusion: Asia-Pacific Report on School Bullying, Violence and Discrimination on the Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000235414>
- 11 Muwonge and Nanyange (2019) The lived realities of lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) women in Uganda, <https://faruganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Lived-Realities-Booklet-June-2019.pdf>
- 12 See for instance Badgett, L. (2014) The Economic Cost of Stigma and the Exclusion of LGBT People: A Case Study of India, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/21515/940400WP0Box380usion0of0LGBT0People.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>; Badgett, M. V. L., Hasenbush, A. and Ekaprasetya Luhur, W. (2017) LGBT Exclusion in Indonesia and Its Economic Effects, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Exclusion-Indonesia-Apr-2017.pdf> and Nyeck, S. N. and Shepherd, D. (2019) The Economic Cost of LGBT Stigma and Discrimination in South Africa, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Impact-LGBT-Discrimination-South-Africa-Dec-2019.pdf>
- 13 See CDC (date unknown) The Socio-Ecological Model: A Framework for Violence Prevention, [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sem\\_framework-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sem_framework-a.pdf)
- 14 See e.g. Earth's (2006) discussion of the existence of diverse gender and sexual identities in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Earth (2006) Diversifying gender: male to female transgender identities and HIV/AIDS programming in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, *Gender and Development*, Volume 14 2006, Issue 2: Marginalised Peoples, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13552070600747297>
- 15 Unless the terminology is not aligned with a rights-based approach.
- 16 This has for example been observed in Uganda. See for instance McCool, A. (2020) "Uganda charges 20 LGBT+ people with risking spread of coronavirus", Thomson Reuters Foundation, 31 March 2020, <https://news.trust.org/item/20200331154246-ffh8z/>
- 17 See COAR (2021) LGBTQ+ Syria: Experiences, Challenges, and Priorities for the Aid Sector, [LGBTQ-Syria-Experiences-Challenges-and-Priorities-for-the-Aid-Sector.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/) (reliefweb.int); Human Rights Watch (2022) Afghanistan: Taliban Target LGBT Afghans, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/26/afghanistan-taliban-target-lgbt-afghans>; and Carlisle, M. (2022) "Fleeing Ukraine, LGBTQ Refugees Search for Safety in Countries Hostile to their Rights", *Time*, March 10, 2022, <https://time.com/6156672/lgbtq-ukraine-refugees-russia/>
- 18 These laws are in many cases remains from colonial-era administrations, which remained in place when countries gained independence.
- 19 The evidence review was conducted through desk-based research of global evidence. All study types, designs, and methodologies were included, including primary and secondary studies, where clear methodologies were available to enable an assessment of quality. For the focus on prevalence of violence, priority was given to studies with samples of 100+ participants and where available, nationally representative surveys and studies

- using probability samples. However, given the limited evidence base, studies with non-probability samples such as convenience samples were also included. For the focus on prevention of violence against LGBTQI+ people, priority was given to systematic reviews, evidence reviews, and peer-reviewed academic articles, however, grey literature (e.g. reports, working papers, briefs, blogs, and news articles produced by non-governmental organisations) was also included given the limited availability of systematic evidence on what works to prevent violence against LGBTQI+ people.
- 20 There is minimal evidence to shed light on violence against older LGBTQI+ people. Young adults tend to be overrepresented in research on violence against LGBTQI+ people. This may be a reflection of organised LGBTQI+ movements being relatively young in many countries, and that a lot of the research to date have been led by LGBTQI+ organisations, who often rely on convenience samples, drawing on their existing networks and reach.
- 21 Sandfort, T., et al. (2015) Histories of forced sex and health outcomes among Southern African lesbian and bisexual women: a cross-sectional study, *BMC Women's Health* (2015) 15:22, <https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-015-0181-6>
- 22 6Rang (2020) Hidden Wounds: A research report on violence against LGBTI in Iran p. 23, <https://www.42d.org/2020/09/17/hidden-wounds-a-research-report-on-violence-against-lgbti-in-iran/>
- 23 6Rang (2020) Ibid.
- 24 This evidence remains rather limited globally. Collecting data on violence against children with diverse SOGIESC is complex, especially in contexts where being LGBTQI+ is criminalised and where there are widespread negative attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people. In such contexts, LGBTQI+ organisations may refrain from doing research or data collection related to children and adolescents with diverse SOGIESC in fear of backlash and crackdowns, as this might put their very existence at risk in contexts where being LGBTQI+ is stigmatised and often depicted as a threat to children
- 25 Meyer, I. H., Wilson, B. D. M., and O'Neill, K. (2021) LGBTQ People in the US: Select Findings from the Generations and TransPop Studies, UCLA Williams Institute, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Generations-TransPop-Toplines-Jun-2021.pdf>
- 26 See e.g. Fulu, E., Miedema, S., Roselli, T., McCook, S. and Ling Chan, K. (2017) Pathways between childhood trauma, intimate partner violence, and harsh parenting: findings from the UN multi-country study on men and violence in Asia and the Pacific, *The Lancet Global Health*, Volume 5, Issues 5, E512-E522, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2214-109X\(17\)30103-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2214-109X(17)30103-1/fulltext)
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- 28 FRA (2020) A long way to go for LGBTI equality, [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1_en.pdf)
- 29 Müller, A., Daskilewicz, K., Kabwe, M. L., Mmolai-Chalmers, A., Morroni, C., Muparamoto, N., Muula, A. S., Odira, V. Zimba, M. and the Southern and Eastern African Research Collective for Health (SEARCH) (2021) Experience of and factors associated with violence against sexual and gender minorities in nine African countries: a cross-sectional study, *BMC Public Health* (2021) 21:357, <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-10314-w>
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